THE DAYS OF AULD LANG SYNE

BY

IAN MACLAREN

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THE DAYS OF AULD LANG SYNE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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THE DAYS

OF

AULD LANG SYNE

BY

IAN MACLAREN,

pseud. of John Watson

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TO THE MEMORY OF MY MOTHER

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A TRIUMPH IN DIPLOMACY

A TRIUMPH IN DIPLOMACY

FARMS were held on lease in Drumtochty, and according to a good old custom descended from father to son, so that some of the farmers' forbears had been tenants as long as Lord Kilspindie's ancestors had been owners. If a family died out, then a successor from foreign parts had to be introduced, and it was in this way Milton made his appearance and scandalised the Glen with a new religion. It happened also in our time that Gormack, having quarrelled with the factor about a feeding byre he wanted built, flung up his lease in a huff, and it was taken at an enormous increase by a guileless tradesman from Muirtown, who had made his money by selling "pigs" (crockeryware), and believed that agriculture came by inspiration. Optimists expected that his cash might last for two years, but pessimists declared their belief that a year would see the end of the "merchant's" experiment, and Gor-

mack watched the course of events from a hired house at Kildrummie.

Jamie Soutar used to give him "a cry" on his way to the station, and brought him the latest news.

"It's maybe juist as weel that ye retired frae business, Gormack, for the auld fairm's that spruced up ye wud hardly ken it wes the same place.

"The merchant's put ventilators intae the feedin' byre, and he's speakin' aboot glass windows tae keep the stots frae wearyin', an' as for inventions, the place is fair scatted up wi' them. There's ain that took me awfu'; it's for peelin' the neeps tae mak them tasty for the cattle beasts.

"Ye hed nae method, man, and a' dinna believe ye hed an inspection a' the years ye were at Gormack. Noo, the merchant is up at half eicht, and gaes ower the hale steadin' wi' Robbie Duff at his heels, him 'at he's got for idle grieve, an' he tries the corners wi' his handkerchief tae see that there's nae stoor (dust).

"It wud dae ye gude tae see his library; the laist day I saw him he wes readin' a book on 'Comparative Agriculture' afore his door,

and he explained hoo they grow the maize in Sooth Ameriky; it wes verra interestin'; a' never got as muckle information frae ony fairmer in Drumtochty."

"A'm gled ye cam in, Jamie," was all Gormack said, "for I wes near takin' this hoose on a three-year lease. Ae year 'ill be eneuch noo, a'm thinkin'."

Within eighteen months of his removal Gormack was again in possession at the old rent, and with a rebate for the first year to compensate him for the merchant's improvements.

"It 'ill tak the feck o' twa years," he explained in the kirkyard, "tae bring the place roond an' pit the auld face on it.

"The byres are nae better than a pair o' fanners wi' wind, and if he hesna planted the laighfield wi' berry bushes; an' a've seen the barley fifty-five pund wecht in that very field.

"It's a doonricht sin tae abuse the land like yon, but it 'ill be a lesson, neeburs, an' a'm no expeckin' anither pig merchant 'ill get a fairm in Drumtochty."

This incident raised Gormack into a historical personage, and invested him with an associ-

ation of humour for the rest of his life, so that when conversation languished in the third some one would ask Gormack "what he hed dune wi' his ventilators," or "hoo the berry hairst wes shapin' this year."

One could not expect a comedy of this kind twice in a generation, but the arranging of a lease was always an event of the first order in our commonwealth, and afforded fine play for every resource of diplomacy. The two contracting parties were the factor, who spent his days in defending his chief's property from the predatory instincts of enterprising farmers, and knew every move of the game, a man of shrewd experience, imperturbable good humour, and many wiles, and on the other side, a farmer whose wits had been sharpened by the Shorter Catechism since he was a boy,—with the Glen as judges. Farms were not put in the *Advertiser* on this estate, and thrown open to the public from Dan to Beersheba, so that there was little risk of the tenant losing his home. Neither did the adjustment of rent give serious trouble, as the fair value of every farm, down to the bit of hill above the arable land and the strips of natural grass along the

burns, was known to a pound. There were skirmishes over the rent, of course, but the battle-ground was the number of improvements which the tenant could wring from the landlord at the making of the lease. Had a tenant been in danger of eviction, then the Glen had risen in arms, as it did in the case of Burnbrae; but this was a harmless trial of strength which the Glen watched with critical impartiality. The game was played slowly between seed-time and harvest, and each move was reported in the kirkyard. Its value was appreciated at once, and although there was greater satisfaction when a neighbour won, yet any successful stroke of the factor's was keenly enjoyed—the beaten party himself conceding its cleverness. When the factor so manipulated the conditions of draining Netherton's meadow land that Netherton had to pay for the tiles, the kirkyard chuckled, and Netherton admitted next market that the factor "wes a lad"—meaning a compliment to his sharpness, for all things were fair in this war—and when Drumsheugh involved the same factor in so many different and unconnected promises of repairs that it was found cheaper in the end to build him a

new steading, the fathers had no bounds to their delight; and Whinnie, who took an hour longer than any other man to get a proper hold of anything, suddenly slapped his leg in the middle of the sermon.

No genuine Scotchman ever thought the less of a neighbour because he could drive a hard bargain, and any sign of weakness in such encounters exposed a man to special contempt in our community. No mercy was shown to one who did not pay the last farthing when a bargain had been made, but there was little respect for the man who did not secure the same farthing when the bargain was being made. If a Drumtochty farmer had allowed his potatoes to go to "Piggie" Walker at that simple-minded merchant's first offer, instead of keeping "Piggie" all day and screwing him up ten shillings an acre every second hour, we would have shaken our heads over him as if he had been drinking, and the well-known fact that Drumsheugh had worsted dealers from far and near at Muirtown market for a generation was not his least solid claim on our respect. When Mrs. Macfadyen allowed it to ooze out in the Kildrummie train that she had obtained a penny

above the market price for her butter, she received a tribute of silent admiration, broken only by an emphatic "Sall" from Hillocks, while Drumsheugh expressed himself freely on the way up :

"Elspeth 's an able wumman ; there 's no a slack bit aboot her. She wud get her meat frae among ither fouks' feet."

There never lived a more modest or unassuming people, but the horse couper that tried to play upon their simplicity did not boast afterwards, and no one was known to grow rich on his dealings with Drumtochty.

This genius for bargaining was of course seen to most advantage in the affair of a lease ; and a year ahead, long before lease had been mentioned, a "cannie" man like Hillocks would be preparing for the campaign. Broken panes of glass in the stable were stuffed with straw after a very generous fashion ; cracks in a byre door were clouted over with large pieces of white wood ; rickety palings were ostentatiously supported ; and the interior of Hillocks' house suggested hard-working and cleanly poverty struggling to cover the defects of a hovel. Neighbours dropping in during those days found

Hillocks wandering about with a hammer, putting in a nail here and a nail there, or on the top of the barn trying to make it water-tight before winter, with the air of one stopping leaks in the hope of keeping the ship afloat till she reaches port. But he made no complaint, and had an air of forced cheerfulness.

"Na, na, yir no interruptin' me; a 'm rael gled tae see ye; a' wes juist doin' what a' cud tae keep things thegither.

"An auld buildin 's a sair trachle, an' yir feared tae meddle wi 't, for ye micht bring it doon aboot yir ears.

"But it 's no reasonable tae expeck it tae last for ever; it 's dune weel and served its time; a' mind it as snod a steadin' as ye wud wish tae see, when a' wes a laddie saxty year past.

"Come in tae the hoose, and we 'ill see what the gude wife hes in her cupboard. Come what may, the 'ill aye be a drop for a freend as lang as a 'm leevin."

"Dinna put yir hat there, for the plaister 's been fallin', an' it micht white it; come ower here frae the window; it 's no very fast, and the wind comes in at the holes. Man, it 's a pleesure tae see ye, an' here 's yir gude health."

When Hillocks went abroad to kirk or market he made a brave endeavour to conceal his depression, but it was less than successful.

"Yon 's no a bad show o' aits ye hae in the wast park the year, Hillocks; a 'm thinkin' the 'ill buke weel."

"Their lukes are the best o' them, Netherton; they 're thin on the grund an' sma' in the head, but a' cudna expeck better, for the land 's fair worn oot; it wes a gude fairm ainee, wi' maybe thirty stacks in the yaird every hairst, and noo a 'm no lookin' for mair than twenty the year."

"Weel, there 's nae mistak aboot yir neeps, at ony rate; ye canna see a dreel noo."

"That wes guano, Netherton; a' hed tae dae something tae get an ootcome wi' ae crap, at ony rate; we maun get the rent some road, ye ken, and pay oor just debts."

Hillocks conveyed the impression that he was gaining a bare existence, but that he could not maintain the fight for more than a year, and the third became thoughtful.

"Div ye mind, Netherton." inquired Drumsheugh on his way from Muirtown station to the market, "hoo mony years Hillocks's 'tack' (lease) hes tae rin?"

"No abune twa or three at maist; a 'm no sure if he hes as muckle."

"It 's oot Martinmas a year as sure yir stannin' there; he 's an auld farrant (far-seeing) lad, Hillocks."

It was known within a week that Hillocks was setting things in order for the battle.

The shrewdest people have some weak point, and Drumtochty was subject to the delusion that old Peter Robertson, the land steward, had an immense back-stairs influence with the factor and his lordship. No one could affirm that Peter had ever said as much, but he never denied it, not having been born in Drumtochty in vain. He had a habit of detaching himself from the fathers and looking in an abstracted way over the wall when they were discussing the factor or the prospects of a lease, which was more than words, and indeed was equal to a small annual income.

"Ye ken mair o' this than ony o' us, a 'm thinkin', Peter, if ye cud open yir mooth; they say naebody's word gaes farther wi' his lordship."

"There 's some fouk say a lot of havers, Drumsheugh, an' it 's no a' true ye hear," and

after a pause Peter would purse his lips and nod. "A 'm no at leeberty tae speak, an' ye maunna press me."

When he disappeared into the kirk his very gait was full of mystery, and the fathers seemed to see his lordship and Peter sitting in council for nights together.

"Didna a' tell ye, neeburs?" said Drumsheugh triumphantly; "ye 'ill no gae far wrang gin ye hae Peter on yir side."

Hillocks held this faith, and added works also, for he compassed Peter with observances all the critical year, although the word lease never passed between them.

"Ye wud be the better o' new seed, Peter," Hillocks remarked casually, as he came on the land steward busy in his potato patch. "A 've some kidneys a' dinna ken what tae dae wi'; a 'll send ye up a bag."

"It 's rael kind o' ye, Hillocks, but ye were aye neeburly."

"Dinna speak o't; that 's naething atween auld neeburs. Man, ye micht gie 's a look in when yir passin' on yir trokes. The gude wife hes some graund eggs for setting."

It was considered a happy device to get

Peter to the spot, and Hillocks's management of the visit was a work of art.

"Maister Robertson wud maybe like tae see thae kebbocks (cheeses) yir sending aff tae Muirtown, gude wife, afore we hae oor tea.

"We canna get intae the granary the richt way, for the stair is no chancy noo, an' it wudna dae tae hae an accident wi' his lordship's land steward," and Hillocks exchanged boxes over the soothing words.

"We 'ill get through the corn-room, but Losh sake, tak care ye dinna trip in the holes o' the floor. A' canna mend mair at it, an' it 's scandalous for wastin' the grain.

"It 's no sae bad a granary if we hedna tae keep the horses' hay in it, for want o' a richt loft.

"Man, there 's times in winter a 'm at ma wits' end wi' a' the cattle in aboot, an' naethin' for them but an open reed (court), an' the wife raging for a calves' byre; but that 's no what we cam here for, tae haver aboot the steadin'."

"Ay, they 're bonnie kebbocks, and when yir crops fail, ye 're gled eneuch tae get a pund or twa oot o' the milk."

And if his Lordship had ever dreamt of

taking Peter's evidence, it would have gone to show that Hillocks's steading was a disgrace to the property.

If any one could inveigle Lord Kilspindie himself to visit a farm within sight of the new lease, he had some reason for congratulation, and his lordship, who was not ignorant of such devices, used to avoid farms at such times with carefulness. But he was sometimes off his guard, and when Mrs. Macfadyen met him by accident at the foot of her garden and invited him to rest, he was caught by the lure of her conversation, and turned aside with a friend to hear again the story of Mr. Pittendriegh's goat.

"Well, how have you been, Mrs. Macfadyen, as young as ever, I see, eh? And how many new stories have you got for me? But, bless my soul, what 's this?" and his lordship might well be astonished at the sight.

Upon the gravel walk outside the door, Elspeth had placed in a row all her kitchen and parlour chairs, and on each stood a big dish of milk, while a varied covering for this open-air dairy had been extemporised out of Jeems' Sabbath umbrella, a tea-tray, a copy of the *Advertiser*, and a picture of the battle of

Waterloo Elspeth had bought from a packman. It was an amazing spectacle, and one not lightly to be forgotten.

"A 'm clean ashamed that ye sud hae seen sic an exhibition, ma lord, and gin a 'd hed time it wud hae been cleared awa'.

"Ye see oor dairy 's that sma' and close that a' daurna keep the mulk in 't a' the het days, an' sae a' aye gie it an airin'; a' wud keep it in anither place, but there 's barely room for the bairns an' oorsels."

Then Elspeth apologised for speaking about household affairs to his lordship, and delighted him with all the gossip of the district, told in her best style, and three new stories, till he promised to build her a dairy and a bed-room for Elsie, to repair the byres, and renew the lease at the old terms.

Elspeth said so at least to the factor, and when he inquired concerning the truth of this foolish concession, Kilspindie laughed, and declared that if he had sat longer he might have had to rebuild the whole place.

As Hillocks could not expect any help from personal fascinations, he had to depend on his own sagacity, and after he had laboured for six

months creating an atmosphere, operations began one day at Muirtown market. The factor and he happened to meet by the merest accident, and laid the first parallels.

"Man, Hillocks, is that you? I hevna seen ye since last rent time. I hear ye're githering the bawbees thegither as usual; ye'ill be buying a farm o' yir own soon."

"Nae fear o' that, Maister Leslie; it's a' we can dae tae get a livin'; we're juist fechtin' awa'; but it comes harder on me noo that a'm gettin' on in years."

"Toots, nonsense, ye're makin' a hundred clear off that farm if ye mak a penny," and then, as a sudden thought, "When is your tack out? it canna hae lang tae run."

"Weel," said Hillocks, as if the matter had quite escaped him also, "a' believe ye're richt; it dis rin oot this verra Martinmas."

"Ye'ill need tae be thinkin', Hillocks, what rise ye can offer; his lordship 'ill be expeckin' fifty pund at the least."

Hillocks laughed aloud, as if the factor had made a successful joke.

"Ye wull hae yir fun, Maister Leslie, but ye ken hoo it maun gae fine. The gude wife an'

me were calculatin', juist by chance, this verra mornin', and we baith settled that we cudna face a new lease comfortable wi' less than a fifty pund reduction, but we micht scrape on wi' forty."

"You and the wife 'ill hae tae revise yir calculations then, an' a'll see ye again when ye 're reasonable."

Three weeks later there was another accidental meeting, when the factor and Hillocks discussed the price of fat cattle at length, and then drifted into the lease question before parting.

"Weel, Hillocks, what aboot that rise? will ye manage the fifty, or must we let ye have it at forty?"

"Dinna speak like that, for it 's no jokin' maitter tae me; we micht dae wi' five-and-twenty aff, or even twenty, but a' dinna believe his lordship wud like to see ain o' his auldest tenants squeezed."

"It 's no likely his lordship 'ill take a penny off when he 's been expecting a rise; so I 'll just need to put the farm in the *Advertiser*—'the present tenant not offering'; but I 'll wait a month to let ye think over it."

When they parted both knew that the rent would be settled, as it was next Friday, on the old terms.

Opinion in the kirkyard was divided over this part of the bargain, a minority speaking of it as a drawn battle, but the majority deciding that Hillocks had wrested at least ten pounds from the factor, which on the tack of nineteen years would come to £190. So far Hillocks had done well, but the serious fighting was still to come.

One June day Hillocks sauntered into the factor's office and spent half an hour in explaining the condition of the turnip "breer" in Drumtochty, and then reminded the factor that he had not specified the improvements that would be granted with the new lease.

"Improvements," stormed the factor. "Ye're the most barefaced fellow on the estate, Hillocks; with a rent like that ye can do yir own repairs," roughly calculating all the time what must be allowed.

Hillocks opened his pocket-book, which contained in its various divisions a parcel of notes, a sample of oats, a whip lash, a bolus for a horse,

and a packet of garden seeds, and finally extricated a scrap of paper.

"Me and the wife juist made a bit note o' the necessaries that we maun hae, and we 're sure ye 're no the gentleman tae refuse them.

"New windows tae the hoose, an' a bit place for dishes, and maybe a twenty pund note for plastering and painting; that 's naething.

"Next, a new stable an' twa new byres, as weel as covering the reed."

"Ye may as well say a new steadin' at once and save time. Man, what do you mean by coming and havering here with your papers?"

"Weel, if ye dinna believe me, ask Peter Robertson, for the condeetion o' the oot-houses is clean reediklus."

So it was agreed that the factor should drive out to see for himself, and the kirkyard felt that Hillocks was distinctly holding his own although no one expected him to get the reed covered.

Hillocks received the great man with obsequious courtesy, and the gude wife gave him of her best, and then they proceeded to business. The factor laughed to scorn the idea that Lord Kilspindie should do anything for the house,

but took the bitterness out of the refusal by a well-timed compliment to Mrs. Stirton's skill, and declaring she could set up the house with the profits of one summer's butter. Hillocks knew better than try to impress the factor himself by holes in the roof, and they argued greater matters, with the result that the stable was allowed and the byres refused, which was exactly what Hillocks anticipated. The reed roof was excluded as preposterous in cost, but one or two lighter repairs were given as a consolation.

Hillocks considered that on the whole he was doing well, and he took the factor round the farm in fair heart, although his face was that of a man robbed and spoiled.

Hillocks was told he need not think of wire-fencing, but if he chose to put up new palings he might have the fir from the Kilspindie woods, and if he did some draining, the estate would pay the cost of tiles. When Hillocks brought the factor back to the house for a cup of tea before parting, he explained to his wife that he was afraid they would have to leave in November—the hardness of the factor left no alternative.

Then they fought the battle of the cattle reed up and down, in and out, for an hour, till the factor, who knew that Hillocks was a careful and honest tenant, laid down his ultimatum.

"There 's not been a tenant in my time so well treated, but if ye see the draining is well done, I 'll let you have the reed."

"A' suppose," said Hillocks, "a 'll need tae fall in." And he reported his achievement to the kirkyard next Sabbath in the tone of one who could now look forward to nothing but a life of grinding poverty.

FOR CONSCIENCE SAKE

I.

THE COUNTRY TYRANT

No man was better liked or more respected than Burnbrae, but the parish was not able to take more than a languid interest in the renewal of his lease, because it was understood that he would get it on his own terms.

Drumsheugh indeed stated the situation admirably one Sabbath in the kirkyard.

"Whatever is a fair rent atween man an' man Burnbrae 'ill offer, and what he canna gie is no worth hevin' frae anither man.

"As for buildings, he 'ill juist tell the factor onything that's needfu', an' his lordship 'ill be content.

"Noo, here 's Hillocks; he 'd argle-bargle wi' the factor for a summer, an' a 'm no blamin' him, for it 's a fine ploy an' rael interestin' tae the pairish, but it 's doonricht wark wi' Burnbrae.

"A 've kent him since he wes a laddie, and a tell ye there 's nae dukery-packery (trickery) aboot Burnbrae; he 's a straicht man an' a gude neebur. He 'ill be settlin' wi' the new factor this week, a' wes hearin'."

Next Sabbath the kirkyard was thrown into a state approaching excitement by Jamie Soutar, who, in the course of some remarks on the prospects of harvest, casually mentioned that Burnbrae had been refused his lease, and would be leaving Drumtochty at Martinmas.

"What for?" said Drumsheugh sharply; while Hillocks, who had been offering his box to Whinnie, remained with outstretched arm.

"Naethin' that ye wud expeck, but juist some bit differ wi' the new factor aboot leavin' his kirk an' jining the lave o' us in the Auld Kirk. Noo, if it hed been ower a cattle reed ye cud hae understude it, but for a man——"

"Nae mair o' yir havers, Jamie," broke in Drumsheugh, "and keep yir tongue aff Burnbrae; man, ye gied me a fricht."

"Weel, weel, ye dinna believe me, but it wes the gude wife hersel' that said it tae me, and she wes terrible cast doon. They 've been a' their merried life in the place, an' weemen tak

ill wi' changes when they're gettin' up in years."

"A' canna believe it, Jamie"—although Drumsheugh was plainly alarmed; "a 'll grant ye that the new factor is little better than a waufie, an' a peetifu' dooncome frae Maister Leslie, but he daurna meddle wi' a man's releegion.

"Bigger men than the factors tried that trade in the auld days, and they didna come oot verra weel. Eh, Jamie, ye ken thae stories better than ony o' us."

"Some o' them cam oot withoot their heads," said Jamie, with marked satisfaction.

"Forby that," continued Drumsheugh, gaining conviction. "What dis the wratch ken aither aboot the Auld Kirk or Free Kirk? if he didna ask me laist month hoo mony P. and O.'s we hed in the glen, meanin' U.P.'s, a 'm jidgin'.

"He 's an Esculopian (Episcopalian) himsel', if he gaes onywhere, an' it wud be a scannal for the like o' him tae mention the word kirk tae Burnbrae."

"Ye never ken what a factor 'ill dae," answered Jamie, whose prejudices were invincible,

"but the chances are that it 'ill be mischief, setting the tenant against the landlord and the landlord against the tenant; tyrannising ower the ane till he daurna lift his head, an' pushioning the mind o' the ither till he disna ken a true man when he sees him."

"Preserve 's!" exclaimed Hillocks, amazed at Jamie's eloquence, for the wrong of Burnbrae had roused our cynic to genuine passion, and his little affectations had melted in the white heat.

"What richt hes ony man to hand ower the families that hev been on his estate afore he wes born tae be harried an' insulted by some domineering upstart of a factor, an' then tae spend the money wrung frae the land by honest fouks amang strangers and foreigners?

"What ails the landlords that they wunna live amang their ain people and oversee their ain affairs, so that laird and farmer can mak their bargain wi' nae time-serving interloper atween, an' the puirest cottar on an estate hae the richt tae see the man on whose lands he lives, as did his fathers before him?

"A 'm no sayin' a word, mind ye, against Maister Leslie, wha 's dead and gaen, or ony

factor like him; he aye made the maist he cud for his lordship, an' that wes what he wes paid for; but he wes a fair-dealin' and gude-hearted man, an' he 'ill be sairly missed an' murned afore we 're dune wi' his successor.

"Gin ony man hes sae muckle land that he disna know the fouk that sow an' reap it, then a 'm judgin' that he hes ower muckle for the gude o' the commonwealth; an' gin ony landlord needs help, let him get some man o' oor ain flesh an' bluid tae guide his affairs.

"But div ye ken, neeburs, what his lordship hes dune, and what sort o' man he 's set ower us, tae meddle wi' affairs he kens naethin' aboot, an' tae trample on the conscience o' the best man in the Glen? Hae ye heard the history o' oor new ruler?"

Drumtochty was in no mood to interrupt Jamie, who was full of power that day.

"A 'll tell ye, then, what a 've got frae a sure hand, an' it 's the story o' mony a factor that is hauding the stick ower the heids o' freeborn Scottish men.

"He 's the cousin of an English lord, whose forbears got a title by rouping their votes, an' ony conscience they hed, tae the highest bid-

der in the bad auld days o' the Georges—that 's the kind o' bluid that 's in his veins, an' it 's no clean.

"His fouk started him in the airmy, but he hed tae leave—cairds or drink, or baith. He wes a wine-merchant for a whilie an' failed, and then he wes agent for a manure company, till they sent him aboot his business.

"Aifterwards he sorned on his freends and gambled at the races, till his cousin got roond Lord Kilspindie, and noo he 's left wi' the poor o' life an' death ower fower pairishes while his lordship's awa' traivellin' for his health in the East.

"It may be that he hes little releegion, as Drumsheugh says, an' we a' ken he hes nae intelligence, but he hes plenty o' deevilry, an' he 's made a beginnin' wi' persecutin' Burnbrae.

"A 'm an Auld Kirk man," concluded Jamie, "an' an Auld Kirk man a 'll dee unless some misleared body tries tae drive me, an' then a' wud jine the Free Kirk. Burnbrae is the stiffest Free Kirker in Drumtochty, an' mony an argument a 've hed wi' him, but that maks nae maitter the day.

"Ilka man hes a richt tae his ain thochts, an'

is bund tae obey his conscience accordin' tae his lichts, an' gin the best man that ever lived is tae dictate oor releegion tae us, then oor fathers focht an' deed in vain."

Scottish reserve conceals a rich vein of heroic sentiment, and this unexpected outburst of Jamie Soutar had an amazing effect on the fathers, changing the fashion of their countenances and making them appear as new men. When he began, they were a group of working farmers, of slouching gait and hesitating speech and sordid habits, quickened for the moment by curiosity to get a bit of parish news fresh from Jamie's sarcastic tongue; as Jamie's fierce indignation rose to flame, a "dour" look came into their faces, turning their eyes into steel, and tightening their lips like a vice, and before he had finished every man stood straight at his full height, with his shoulders set back and his head erect, while Drumsheugh looked as if he saw an army in battle array, and even Whinnie grasped his snuff-box in a closed fist as if it had been a drawn sword. It was the danger signal of Scottish men, and ancient persecutors who gave no heed to it in the past went crashing to their doom.

"Div ye mean tae say, James Soutar," said Drumsheugh in another voice than his wont, quieter and sterner, "ye ken this thing for certain, that the new factor hes offered Burnbrae the choice atween his kirk an' his fairm?"

"That is sae, Drumsheugh, as a 'm stannin' in this kirkyaird—although Burnbrae himsel', honest man, hes said naething as yet—an' a' thocht the suner the pairish kent the better."

"Ye did weel, Jamie, an' a' tak back what a' said aboot jokin'; this 'ill be nae jokin' maitter aither for the factor or Drumtochty."

There was silence for a full minute, for Whinnie himself knew that it was a crisis in Drumtochty, and the fathers waited for Drumsheugh to speak.

People admired him for his sharpness in bargaining, and laughed at a time about his meanness in money affairs, but they knew that there was a stiff backbone in Drumsheugh, and that in any straits of principle he would play the man.

"This is a black beesiness, neeburs, an' nae man among us can see the end o 't, for gin they begin by tryin' tae harry the Frees intae the Auld Kirk, the next thing they 'ill dae wull be

tae drive us a' doon tae the English Chaipel at Kildrummie."

"There 's juist ae mind, a' tak' it, wi' richt-thinkin' men," and Drumsheugh's glance settled on Hillocks, whose scheming ways had somewhat sapped his manhood, and the unfortunate land-steward, whose position was suddenly invested with associations of treachery. "We 'ill pay oor rent and dae oor duty by the land like honest men, but we 'ill no tak oor releegion, no, nor oor politics, frae ony livin' man, naither lord nor factor.

"We 're a' sorry for Burnbrae, for the brunt o' the battle 'ill fa' on him, an' he 's been a gude neebur ta a' body, but there 's nae fear o' him buying his lease wi' his kirk. Ma certes, the factor chose the worst man in the Glen for an aff go. Burnbrae wud raither see his hale plenishing gae doon the Tochty than play Judas to his kirk.

"It 's an awfu' peety that oor auld Scotch kirk wes split, and it wud be a heartsome sicht tae see the Glen a' aneath ae roof aince a week. But ae thing we maun grant, the Disruption lat the warld ken there wes some spunk in Scotland.

"There 's nae man a' wud raither welcome tae oor kirk than Burnbrae, gin he cam o' his ain free will, but it wud be better that the kirk sud stand empty than be filled wi' a factor's hirelings."

Domsie took Drumsheugh by the hand, and said something in Latin that escaped the fathers, and then they went into kirk in single file with the air of a regiment of soldiers.

Drumsheugh set in the "briest o' the laft," as became a ruling elder, and had such confidence in the minister's orthodoxy that he was accustomed to meditate during the sermon, but on this memorable day he sat upright and glared at the pulpit with a ferocious expression. The doctor was disturbed by this unusual attention, and during his mid-sermon snuff sought in vain for a reason, since the sermon, "On the Certainty of Harvest, proved by the Laws of Nature and the Promises of Revelation," was an annual event, and Drumsheugh, walking by faith, had often given it his warm approval. He had only once before seen the same look—after the great potato calamity; and when the elder came to the manse, and they had agreed as to the filling quality of the weather, the doc-

tor inquired anxiously how Drumsheugh had done with his potatoes.

"Weel eneuch," with quite unaffected indifference. "Weel eneuch, as prices are gaein', auchteen pund, 'Piggie' liftin' an' me cairtin'; but hev ye heard aboot Burnbrae?" and Drumsheugh announced that the factor, being left unto the freedom of his own will, had opened a religious war in Drumtochty.

His voice vibrated with a new note as he stated the alternative offered to Burnbrae, and the doctor, a man well fed and richly coloured, as became a beneficed clergyman, turned purple.

"I told Kilspindie, the day before he left," burst out the doctor, "that he had made a mistake in bringing a stranger in John Leslie's place, who was a cautious, sensible man, and never made a drop of bad blood all the time he was factor.

"'Tomkyns is a very agreeable fellow, Davidson,' his lordship said to me, 'and a first-rate shot in the cover; besides, he has seen a good deal of life, and knows how to manage men.'

"It 's all bad life he 's seen,' I said, 'and it 's not dining and shooting make a factor. That

man 'ill stir up mischief on the estate before you come back, as sure 's your name 's Kilspindie,' but I never expected it would take this turn.

"Fool of a man," and the doctor raged through the study, "does he not know that it would be safer for him to turn the rotation of crops upside down and to double every rent than to meddle with a man's religion in Drumtochty?

"Drumsheugh," said the doctor, coming to a stand, "I 've been minister of this parish when there was only one church, and I 've been minister since the Free Church began. I saw half my people leave me, and there were hot words going in '43; but nothing so base as this has been done during the forty years of my office, and I call God to witness I have lived at peace with all men.

"I would rather cut off my right hand than do an injury to Burnbrae or any man for his faith, and it would break my heart if the Free Kirk supposed I had anything to do with this deed.

"The factor is to be at the inn on Tuesday; I 'll go to him there and then, and let him know

that he cannot touch Burnbrae without rousing the whole parish of Drumtochty."

"Ye 'ill tak me wi' ye, sir, no tae speak, but juist tae let him see hoo the Auld Kirk feels."

"That I will, Drumsheugh; there 's grit in the Glen; and look you, if you meet Burnbrae coming from his kirk ye might just——"

"It wes in ma ain mind, doctor, tae sae a word for 's a', an' noo a 'll speak wi' authority. The Auld and the Frees shoother tae shoother for the first time since '43—it 'ill be graund.

"Sall," said Drumsheugh, as this new aspect of the situation opened, "the factor hes stirred a wasp's byke when he meddled wi' Drumtochty."

The council of the Frees had been somewhat divided that morning—most holding stoutly that Doctor Davidson knew nothing of the factor's action, a few in their bitterness being tempted to suspect every one, but Burnbrae was full of charity.

"Dinna speak that wy, Netherton, for it 's no Christian; Doctor Davidson may be a Moderate, but he 's a straicht-forward an' honourable gentleman, as his father wes afore him, and hes never said 'kirk' to ane o' us save in the wy o' freendliness a' his days.

"It 's no his blame nor Lord Kilspindie's, ye may lippen (trust) to that; this trial is the wull o' God, an' we maun juist seek grace tae be faithfu'."

Every Sabbath a company of the Auld Kirk going west met a company of the Frees going east, and nothing passed except a nod or "a wee saft," in the case of drenching rain, not through any want of neighbourliness, but because this was the nature God had been pleased to give Drumtochty.

For the first time, the Auld Kirk insisted on a halt and conversation. It did not sound much, being mainly a comparison of crops among the men, and a brief review of the butter market by the women—Jamie Soutar only going the length of saying that he was coming next Sabbath to hear the last of Cunningham's "course"—but it was understood to be a demonstration, and had its due effect.

"A' wes wrang," said Netherton to Donald Menzies; "they 've hed naething tae dae wi 't; a' kent that the meenute a' saw Jamie Soutar. Yon 's the first time a' ever mind, them stoppin'," and a mile further on Netherton added, "That 's ae gude thing, at ony rate."

Burnbrae and Drumsheugh met later, and alone, and there were no preliminaries.

"Jamie Soutar told us this mornin', Burnbrae, in the kirkyaird, and a 've come straicht the noo frae the doctor's study, and ye never saw a man mair concerned.

"He chairged me tae say, withoot delay, that he wud raither hae cut aff his richt hand than dae ye an ill, an' he 's gaein' this verra week tae gie his mind tae the factor.

"Man, it wud hae dune your hert gude gin ye hed heard Jamie this mornin' in the kirkyaird; he fair set the heather on fire—a 'm no settled yet—we 're a' wi' ye, every man o 's.

"Na, na, Burnbrae, we 're no tae lose ye yet; ye 'ill hae yir kirk and yir fairm in spite o' a' the factors in Perthshire, but a 'm expeckin' a fecht."

"Thank ye, Drumsheugh, thank ye kindly; and wull ye tell Doctor Davidson that he hesna lived forty years in the Glen for naethin'?

"We said this mornin' that he wud scorn tae fill his kirk with renegades, and sae wud ye a', but a' wesna prepared for sic feelin'.

"There 's ae thing maks me prood o' the Glen: nae man, Auld or Free, hes bidden me

pit ma fairm afore ma kirk, but a 'body expecks me tae obey ma conscience.

"A 've got till Monday week tae consider ma poseetion, and it 'ill depend on the factor whether a 'll be allowed tae close ma days in the place where ma people hae lived for sax generations, or gae forth tae dee in a strange land."

"Dinna speak like that, Burnbrae; the doctor hesna hed his say yet; the 'll be somethin' worth hearin' when he faces the factor;" and Drumsheugh waited for the battle between Church and State with a pleasurable anticipation of lively argument, tempered only by a sense of Burnbrae's anxiety.

The factor, who was dressed in the height of sporting fashion and looked as if he had lived hard, received the doctor and his henchman with effusion.

"Doctor Davidson, Established Church clergyman of Drumtochty? quite a pleasure to see you; one of our farmers, I think; seen you before, eh? Drum, Drum—can't quite manage your heathenish names yet, d' ye know.

"Splendid grouse moor you 've got up here, and only one poacher in the whole district, the keepers tell me. D' you take a gun yourself,

Doctor—ah—Donaldson, or does the kirk not allow that kind of thing?" and the factor's laugh had a fine flavour of contempt for a Scotch country minister.

"My name is Davidson, at your service, Mr. Tomkyns, and I've shot with Lord Kilspindie when we were both young fellows in the 'forties, from Monday to Friday, eight hours a day, and our bag for the week was the largest that has ever been made in Perthshire.

"But I came here on a matter of business, and, if you have no objection, I would like to ask a simple question."

"Delighted, I 'm sure, to tell you anything you wish," said the factor, considerably sobered.

"Well a very unpleasant rumour is spreading through the parish that you have refused to renew a farmer's lease unless he promised to leave the Free Church?"

"An old fellow, standing very straight, with white hair, called—let me see, Baxter; yes, that 's it, Baxter; is that the man?"

"Yes, that is the name," said the doctor, with growing severity; "John Baxter of Burnbrae, the best man in the parish of Drumtochty; and I want an answer to my question."

"You will get it, and Tomkyns fixed his eye-glass with an aggressive air. "I certainly told Baxter that if he wanted to stay on the estate he must give up his dissenting nonsense and go to the kirk."

"May I ask your reason for this extraordinary condition?" and Drumsheugh could see that the Doctor was getting dangerous.

"Got the wrinkle from my cousin's, Lord De Tomkyns's, land agent. He 's cleared all the Methodists off their estate.

"'The fewer the dissenters the better,' he said to me, 'when you come to an election, d' you know.' "

"Are you mad, and worse than mad? Who gave you authority to interfere with any man's religion? You know neither the thing you are doing, nor the men with whom you have to do. Our farmers, thank God, are not ignorant serfs who know nothing and cannot call their souls their own, but men who have learned to think for themselves, and fear no one save Almighty God."

The factor could hardly find his voice for amazement.

"But, I say, aren't you the Established Kirk

minister and a Tory? This seems to me rather strange talk, don't you know."

"Perhaps it does," replied the doctor, "but there is nothing a man feels deeper than the disgrace of his own side."

"Well," said Tomkyns, stung by the word disgrace, "there are lots of things I could have done for you, but if this is your line it may not be quite so pleasant for yourself in Drumtochty, let me tell you."

The doctor was never a diplomatic advocate, and now he allowed himself full liberty.

"You make Drumtochty pleasant or unpleasant for me!" with a withering glance at the factor. "There is one man in this parish neither you nor your master nor the Queen herself, God bless her, can touch, and that is the minister of the Established Church.

"I was here before you were born, and I 'll be here when you have been dismissed from your office. There is just one favour I beg of you, and I hope you will grant it"—the doctor was now thundering—"it is that you never dare to speak to me the few times you may yet come to the parish of Drumtochty."

Drumsheugh went straight to give Burnbrae

an account of this interview, and his enthusiasm was still burning.

"Naethin' 'ill daunt the doctor—tae hear him dress the factor wes michty; he hed his gold-headed stick wi' him, 'at wes his father's, an' when he brocht it dune on the table at the end, the eyegless droppit oot o' the waefu' body's 'ee, an' the very rings on his fingers jingled.

"The doctor bade me say 'at he hed pled yir case, but he wes feared he hed dune ye mair ill than gude."

"Be sure he hesna dune that, Drumsheugh; a' didna expeck that he cud change the factor's mind, an' a 'm no disappointed.

"But the doctor hes dune a gude wark this day he never thocht o', and that will bring a blessing beyond mony leases; for as lang as this generation lives an' their children aifter them, it will be remembered that the parish minister, wi' his elder beside him, forgot thae things wherein we differ, and stude by the Free Kirk in the 'oor o' her adversity."

II

THE ENDLESS CHOICE

It was known in the Glen that Burnbrae must choose on Monday between his farm and his conscience, and the atmosphere in the Free Church on Sabbath was such as might be felt. When he arrived that morning, with Jean and their three sons—the fourth was in a Highland regiment on the Indian frontier—the group that gathered at the outer gate opened to let them pass, and the elders shook Burnbrae by the hand in serious silence; and then, instead of waiting to discuss the prospects of the Sustentation Fund with Netherton, Burnbrae went in with his family, and sat down in the pew where they had worshipped God since the Disruption.

The cloud of the coming trial fell on the elders, and no man found his voice for a space. Then Donald Menzies's face suddenly lightened, and he lifted his head.

"'With persecutions' wass in the promise, and the rest it will be coming sure."

"You hef the word, Donald Menzies," said Lachlan; and it came to this handful of Scottish peasants that they had to make that choice that has been offered unto every man since the world began.

Carmichael's predecessor was minister of the Free Church in those days, who afterwards got University preferment—he wrote a book on the Greek particles, much tasted in certain circles—and is still called "the Professor" in a hushed voice by old people. He was so learned a scholar that he would go out to visit without his hat, and so shy that he could walk to Kildrummie with one of his people on the strength of two observations, the first at Tochty bridge and the other at the crest of the hill above the station. Lachlan himself did not presume at times to understand his sermons, but the Free Church loved their scholar, for they knew the piety and courage that dwelt in the man.

The manse housekeeper, who followed Cunningham with his hat and saw that he took his food at more or less regular intervals, was at her wit's end before that Sabbath.

"A 've hed chairge o' him," she explained to the clachan, "since he wes a laddie, an' he 's a fine bit craiturie ony wy ye tak' him.

"Ye juist hammer at his door in the morning till ye 're sure he 's up, an' bring him oot o' the study when denner's ready, an' watch he hesna a buke hoddit aboot him—for he 's tricky—an' come in on him every wee whilie till ye think he 's hed eneuch, an' tak' awa his lamp when it 's time for him tae gang tae bed, an' it 's safer no tae lat him hae mair than a can'le end, or he wud set tae readin' in his bed. Na, na, he 's no ill tae guide.

"But keep 's a', he 's been sae crouse this week that he 's fair gae'n ower me. He 's been speakin' tae himsel' in the study, an' he 'll get up in the middle o' his denner an' rin roond the gairden.

"Ye ken the minister hardly ever speaks gin ye dinna speak tae him, though he 's aye canty ; bit this week if he didna stop in the middle o' his denner an' lay aff a story aboot three hunder lads that held a glen wi' their swords till the laist o' them wes killed—a 'm dootin' they were Hielan' caterans—an' he yokit on the

auld martyrs ae nicht tae sic an extent that I wes near the greetin'.

"Ye wudna ken him thae times—he 's twice his size, an' the langidge poors frae him. A' tell ye Burnbrae 's on his brain, and ye 'll hae a sermon worth hearin' on Sabbath. Naebody kens the spirit 'at 's in ma laddie when he 's roosed," concluded Maysie, with the just pride of one who had tended her scholar since childhood.

"What shall it profit a man," was the text, and in all the sermon there was not one abusive word, but the minister exalted those things that endure for ever above those that perish in the using, with such spiritual insight and wealth of illustration—there was a moral resonance in his very voice which made men's nerves tingle—that Mrs. Macfadyen, for once in her life, refused to look at heads, and Donald Menzies could hardly contain himself till the last psalm.

It was the custom in the Free Kirk for the minister to retire first, facing the whole congregation on his way to the vestry at the back of the church, and Cunningham confided to a friend that he lost in weight during the middle

passage; but on this Sabbath he looked every man in the face, and when he came to Burnbrae's pew the minister paused, and the two men clasped hands. No word was spoken, not a person moved around, but the people in front felt the thrill, and knew something had happened.

No one was inclined to speak about that sermon on the way home, and Netherton gave himself with ostentation to the finger-and-toe disease among the turnips. But the Free Kirk had no doubt what answer Burnbrae would give the factor, and each man resolved within his heart that he would do likewise in his time.

"It 's michty," was Jamie Soutar's comment, who had attended the Free Kirk to show his sympathy, "what can be dune by speech. Gin there wes a juitlin', twa-faced wratch in the kirk, yon sermon hes straichtened him oot an' made a man o' him.

"Maister Cunningham 's no muckle tae look at an' he 's the quietest body a' ever saw; but he 's graund stuff every inch o' him, and hes the courage o' a lion."

Burnbrae and Jean walked home that Sabbath alone, and the past encompassed their hearts.

The road they had walked since childhood, unchanged save for the gap where the old beech fell in the great storm, and the growth of the slowly maturing oaks; the burns that ran beneath the bridges with the same gurgling sound while generations came and went; the fields that had gone twelve times through the rotation of grass, oats, turnips, barley, grass since they remembered; the farmhouses looking down upon the road with familiar kindly faces —Gormack had a new window, and Claywhat another room above the kitchen—awoke sleeping memories and appealed against their leaving.

When they came below Woodhead, the two old people halted and looked up the track where the hawthorn hedges, now bright with dog-roses, almost met, and a cart had to force its way through the sweet-smelling greenery. It was in Woodhead that Jean had been reared, and a brother was still living there with her only sister.

"Div ye mind the nicht, Jean, that ye cam doon the road wi' me and a' askit ye tae be ma wife? it wes aboot this time."

"It 'ill be forty-five year the mornin's nicht,

John, and a' see the verra place fra here. It wes at the turn o' the road, and there 's a rose-bush yonder still.

"Ye pluckit me a rose afore we pairtit, an' a' hae the leaves o't in the cover of ma Bible, an' the rose at oor gairden gate is a cuttin' that a' took."

The old school-house was not visible from the road, but on sight of the path that turned upwards to its wood, Jean looked at Burnbrae with the inextinguishable roguery of a woman in her eyes, and he understood.

"Aye, ye were a hempie o' a lassie, Jean, making faces at me as often as a' lookit at ye, an' crying, 'Douce John Baxter,' till a' wes near the greetin' on the wy hame."

"But a' likit ye a' the time better than ony laddie in the schule; a' think a' luved ye frae the beginnin', John."

"Wes 't luve gared ye dad ma ears wi' yir bukes at the corner, and shute me in amang the whins? but ye 'll hae forgotten that, wumman."

"Fient a bit o' me; it wes the day ye took Meg Mitchell's pairt, when we fell oot ower oor places in the class. A' didna mind her bein'

abune me, but a' cudna thole ye turnin' against me."

"Hoo lang is that ago, Jean?"

"Sax and fifty year ago laist summer."

The auld kirk stood on a bluff overlooking the Tochty, with the dead of the Glen round it; and at the look on Jean's face, Burnbrae turned up the kirk road along which every family went some day in sorrow.

The Baxters' ground lay in a corner, where the sun fell pleasantly through the branches of a beech in the afternoon, and not far from the place where afterwards we laid Domsie to rest. The gravestone was covered on both sides with names, going back a century, and still unable to commemorate all the Baxters that had lived and died after an honest fashion in Drumtochty. The last name was that of a child:

Jean, the daughter of John Baxter,
Farmer of Burnbrae,
Aged 7 years.

There was no "beloved" nor any text, but each spring the primroses came out below, and all summer a bunch of pinks touched the "Jean" with their fragrant blossoms.

Her mother stooped to pluck a weed from among the flowers and wipe the letters of the name where the moss was gathering, then she bent her head on the grey, worn stone, and cried, "Jeannie, Jeannie, ma bonnie lassie."

"Dinna greet, Jean, as though we hed nae lassie," said Burnbrae, "for there 's naethin' here but the dust. Ye mind what the minister read that day, 'He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom.'

"Be thankfu' we have the fower laddies spared, a' daein' weel, an' ane near ready for a kirk, an' you an' me thegither still. We 've hed mony mercies, Jean."

"A 'm no denyin' that, John, an' a 'm prood o' the laddies; but there 's no' a day a' dinna miss ma lassie, an' a' can hear her sayin' 'mither' still when ye 're a' in the fields and a 'm alane."

"Wae 's me, wha will care for her grave when we 're far awa an' no a Baxter left in the Glen? It 's no lichtsome to leave the hoose whar we 've livit sae lang, an' the fields ye 've lookit at a' yir days, but it 's sairest tae leave yir dead."

The past with the tender associations that make a woman's life was tightening its hold on Jean, and when they looked down on the Glen

from the height of Burnbrae, her voice broke again:

"It 's a bonnie sicht, John, an' kindly tae oor eyes; we 'ill never see anither tae sateesfy oor auld age."

"A 've seen nae ither a' ma days," said Burnbrae, "an' there can be nane sae dear tae me noo in this warld; but it can be boucht ower dear, lass," and when she looked at him, "wi' oor souls, Jean, wi' oor souls."

No Drumtochty man felt at ease on Sabbath, or spoke quite like himself at home, till he had escaped from his blacks and had his tea. Then he stretched himself with an air of negligence, and started on a survey of his farm, which allowed of endless meditation, and lasted in summer time unto the going down of the sun. It was a leisurely progress, in which time was of no importance, from field to field and into every corner of each field, and from beast to beast and round every beast to the completion of as many circles as there were beasts. The rate was about one and a half miles an hour, excluding halts, and the thumbs were never removed from the armholes except for experimental observations. No one forgot that it

was Sabbath, and there were things no right-thinking man would do. Drumsheugh might sample a head of oats in his hand, in sheer absence of mind, but he would have been ashamed to lift a shaw of potatoes; and although Hillocks usually settled the price he would ask for his fat cattle in the midst of these reveries, he always felt their ribs on a Saturday. When the gudeman came in, he had taken stock with considerable accuracy, but he was justly horrified to find his wife asleep, with her head uncomfortably pillowed on the open family Bible.

With the more religious men these Sabbath evening walks had in them less of this world and more of that which is to come. Donald Menzies had seen strange things in the fading light as he wandered among the cattle, and this evening the years that were gone came back to Burnbrae. For a townsman may be born in one city and educated in a second, and married in a third, and work in a fourth. His houses are but inns, which he uses and forgets; he has no roots, and is a vagrant on the face of the earth. But the countryman is born and bred, and marries and toils and dies on one farm, and

the scene he looks at in his old age is the same he saw in his boyhood. His roots are struck deep into the soil, and if you tear them up, his heart withers and dies. When some townsman therefore reads of a peasant being cast out of his little holding, he must not consider that it is the same as a tenant going from one street to another, for it is not a house this farmer leaves: it is his life.

Burnbrae passed through the kitchen on his way out, and an old chair by the fireside made him a laddie again, gathered with the family on a winter Sabbath evening, and he heard his father asking the "chief end of man." The first gate on the farm swung open at a touch, and he remembered this was his father's idea, and he found the wedge that changed the elevation of the hinge. That was a dyke he built in his youth, and there was the stone he blasted out of the field, for the hole was still open. Down in that meadow there used to be a pond where he was almost drowned nearly seventy years ago, but he had drained it, and the corn upon the place was growing rank. This was the little bridge he had mended for the home-coming of his bride, and from that rock his old

father had directed him with keen interest, and in that clump of trees, alone before the Eternal, the great event of his soul had come to pass. He had often thought that some day he would be carried over that bridge, and trusted he was ready, but he hoped he might be spared to see the Black Watch come home, and to hear his youngest son preach in Drumtochty Free Kirk. The agony of leaving came upon him, and Burnbrae turned aside among the trees.

He sought out Jean on his return, and found her in a little summer-house, which he had made the first year of their marriage. As they sat together in silence, each feeling for the other, Burnbrae's eyes fell on a patch of annuals, and it seemed to him as if they made some letters.

Burnbrae looked at his wife.

"Is that oor lassie's name?"

"Aye, it is. A 've sown it mony a year, but this is the first summer a' cud read it plain, and the last a 'll sow it in oor gairden; an' yon 's the apple tree we planted the year she wes born, an' the blossom never wes sae bonnie as this year.

"Oh, John, a' ken we oucht tae dae what 's

richt, an' no deny oor principles; but a' canna leave, a' canna leave.

"It 's no siller or plenishing a 'm thinkin' aboot; it 's the hoose ye brocht me tae that day, an' the room ma bairns were born in, an' the gairden she played in, an' whar a' think o' her in the gloamin'.

"It 's mair than a' can bear tae pairt wi' ma hame, an' the kirkyaird, an' gang into a strange place where a' ken naebody and naebody kens us. It 'ill brak ma hert.

"Are ye fixed aboot this maitter, John? . . . there 's no muckle difference aifter a'. . . . Dr. Davidson 's a fine man, an' a 've herd ye praise him yersel . . . if ye promised tae gang at a time, maybe. . . ." And Jean touched Burnbrae timidly with her hand.

"A' want tae dee here and be beeried wi' Jeannie."

"Dinna try me like this," Burnbrae cried, with agony in his voice, "for the cross is heavy eneuch already withoot the wecht o' yir pleadin'.

"Ye dinna see the nicht what ye are askin', for yir een are blind wi' tears. If a' gied in tae ye and did what ye ask, ye wud be the

sorriest o' the twa, for nane hes a truer hert than ma ain' wife.

"If it wes onything else ye askit, ye wud hae it, Jean, though it cost me a' my gear, but a' daurna deny my Lord, no even for yir dear sake. . . . He died for us . . . an' this is a' He asks. . . .

"A' maun sae no tae the factor the mornin', an' if ye're against me it 'ill be hard on flesh and blood. . . . Say yir wullin', an' a' fear nae evil, Jean."

"A 'm tryin' hard, John," and they spoke together with a low voice, while the kindly darkness fell as a sacred cover round about them; and when they came into the light of the kitchen, where the family was waiting, there was victory on the face of Burnbrae and Jean his wife.

"Well, Baxter," said the factor in his room next day, "your offer is all right in money, and we 'ill soon settle the building. By the way, I suppose you 've thought over that kirk affair, and will give your word to attend the Established Church, eh?"

"Ye may be sure that a 've gien a' ye said ma best judgment, an' there 's naething I

wudna dae to be left in Burnbrae, but this thing ye ask a' canna grant."

"Why not?" and the factor, lounging in his chair, eyed Burnbrae contemptuously as he stood erect before him. "My groom tells me that there is not a grain of difference between all those kirks in Scotland, and that the whole affair is just down-right bad temper, and I believe he 's right."

"A' wudna say onything disrespectfu', sir, but it 's juist possible that naither you nor your groom ken the history o' the Free Church; but ye may be sure sensible men and puir fouk dinna mak sic sacrifices for bad temper."

"Come along, then," and the factor allowed himself to be merry, "let 's hear a sermon. You Scotchmen are desperate fellows for that kind of thing. Does the Free Kirk sing Psalms one way and the Established Kirk another? It 's some stark nonsense, I know."

"It may be to you, but it is not to us; and at ony rate, it is the truth accordin' tae ma licht, an' ilka man maun gae by that as he sall answer at the Judgment."

"Don't stand canting here. Do you mean

to say that you will lose your farm, and see your family at the door for a kirk? You can't be such a drivelling fool; and a fellow of your age too! Yes or no?"

"A' hae nae choice, then, but tae say No; an' that's ma laist word."

"Then you and the rest of your friends will march, d' you understand? You may take this for notice at once—and I 'll get some tenants that have respect for—ah—for—in fact, for law and order."

"Ye may clear the Free Kirk fouk oot o' Drumtochty, an' get new tenants o' some kind; but when ye hae filled the Glen wi' greedy time-servers his lordship 'ill miss the men that coonted their conscience mair than their fairms."

"If you have quite finished, you may go," said the factor; "leaving your farm does not seem to touch you much."

"Sir," replied Burnbrae with great solemnity, "I pray God you may never have such sorrow as you have sent on my house this day."

Jean was waiting at the top of the brae for her man, and his face told her the event.

"Ye maunna be cast doon, Jean," and his

voice was very tender, "an' a' ken weel ye 'ill no be angry wi' me."

"Angry?" said Jean; "ma hert failed last nicht for a whilie, but that 's ower noo an' for ever. John a' luvit ye frae the time we sat in the schule thegither, an' a' wes a happy wumman when ye mairried me.

"A 've been lifted mony a time when a' saw how fouk respeckit ye, and abune a' when ye gaed doon the kirk with the cups in yir hands at the Saicrament, for a' kent ye were worthy.

"Ye 're dearer tae me ilka year that comes and gaes, but a' never luvit ye as a' dae this nicht, an' a' coont sic a husband better than onything God cud gie me on earth."

And then Jean did what was a strange thing in Drumtochty—she flung her arms round Burnbrae's neck and kissed him.

III

A DISPLENISHING SALE

DRUMTOCHTY, hoeing the turnips for the second time on a glorious day in early August, saw the Kildrummie auctioneer go up the left side of the Glen and down the right like one charged with high affairs. It was understood that Jock Constable could ride anything in the shape of a horse, and that afternoon he had got ten miles an hour out of an animal which had been down times without number, and whose roaring could be heard from afar. Jock was in such haste that he only smacked his lips as he passed our public-house, and waved his hand when Hillocks shouted, "Hoo's a' wi' ye?" from a neighbouring field. But he dismounted whenever he saw a shapely gate-post, and spent five minutes at the outer precincts of the two churches.

"It 'ill be a roup," and Hillocks nodded to

his foreman with an air of certitude; "a' wunner wha 's it is; some Kildrummie man, maist likely."

When the advertising disease first broke out in the country, a Muirtown grocer with local connections disfigured our main road with his list of prices, till in a moment of incredible audacity he affixed a cheap tea advertisement to the Parish Kirk door, and was understood to have escaped penal servitude by offering an abject apology to Doctor Davidson, and contributing ten pounds for the poor of the parish. Constable's announcements were the only mural literature afterwards allowed in the Glen, and Jock prided himself on their grandeur. They were headed in large type "Displenishing Sale," and those imposing words, which had never been heard in the ordinary speech of the Glen within the memory of man, were supported in the body of the document by "heifers," "fat oxen," "draught horses," "agricultural implements," and "dairy apparatus." Jock had "cereals" in one bill, but yielded to public feeling, and returned to "oats and barley" as a concession to the condition of a semi-educated people.

Persons, without imagination, used to carp at the grand style and demand explanations, but short of "cereals," Jock carried the community.

"What gars Jock aye say 'Displenishing Sale'?" inquired Hillocks one day, after he had given ten minutes to a bill and done the more ambitious words in syllables. "An' what dis he mean by 'heifer'? A' ken the beasts on Milton as weel as ma ain, an' a' never heard tell o' 'heifer' ootside o' the Bible."

"Ye 're a doited (stupid) body, Hillocks," said Jamie Soutar, who was always much tickled by Jock's efforts; "ye wudna surely expeck an unctioneer tae speak aboot roups, and div ye think yersel that quey soonds as weel as heifer? Gin ye hed naething but oor ain words on a post, naebody wud look twice at it, but this kind o' langidge solemnises ye an' maks ye think."

"Man Jamie, a' never thocht o' that," for this argument touched Hillocks closely, "an' a 'm no sayin' but ye 're richt. Jock 's a gabby body an' no feared o' words."

Constable made a point of publishing on Saturday as late as light would allow, so that his literature might burst upon the Glen on

Sabbath morning with all the charm of a surprise. Whether a man came east or west, he had the benefit of three bills before he reached the kirk and settled down quietly to the one on the right hand pillar of the kirkyard gate. Less than this number of wayside editions would not have served the purpose, because there was a severe etiquette in reading. When Whinnie emerged on the main road and caught sight of "Displenishing Sale," he would have been ashamed to cross or show any indecent curiosity. He only nodded and proceeded to settle the farm in his mind. The second bill, whose geography he mastered without stopping, verified his conclusion and left him free to run over in his mind the stock and crops that would be offered. A pause not exceeding one minute was allowed for the head of the house at the third bill to detect any gross mistake in his general review, but the examination of minute details was reserved for the large paper edition at the kirkyard. This was studied from the first word to the last in profound silence, but was rigidly excluded from direct quotation on Sabbath. When Whinnie joined the fathers he only referred to Milton's

roup as a rumour that had reached his ears, and might have been discussed at length on any other day.

Drumsheugh, waking, as it were, from a reverie:

"A' wudna wunner gin the Milton roup did come aff sune . . . there 's twa acre mair neeps than a' expeckit."

Then Hillocks would casually remark, as one forced into a distasteful conversation, "The gude wife keeps ae coo, a' hear; she 'ill be taking a pendicle at Kildrummie, a 'm judgin'," but any thorough treatment was hindered by circumstances.

The kirkyard was only once carried beyond itself by Jock's bills, and that was when he announced Burnbrae's sale.

"Keep 's a', fouk, this is no lichtsome," was all Whinnie could say as he joined the group, and the boxes were passed round without speech.

"Weel, weel," Hillocks said at last, in the tone consecrated to funerals, "he 'ill be sair missed."

It was felt to be an appropriate note, and the mouths of the fathers were opened.

"A graund fairmer," continued Hillocks, encouraged by the sympathetic atmosphere; "he kent the verra day tae sow, an' ye cudna find a thistle on Burnbrae, no, nor a docken. Gin we a' keepit oor land as clean it wud set us better," and Hillocks spoke with the solemnity of one pointing the moral of a good man's life.

"He hed a fine hert tae," added Whinnie, feeling that Hillocks's eulogy admitted of expansion; "he cam up laist summer when George wes lying in the decline, and he says tae me, 'Whinnie, yir pasture is fair burnt up; pit yir coos in ma second cutting: George maun hae gude milk,' an' they fed a' the summer in Burnbrae's clover. He didna like sic things mentioned, but it disna maitter noo. Marget wes awfu' touched."

"But ye cudna ca' Burnbrae a shairp business man," said Jamie Soutar critically; "he keepit Jess Stewart daein' naethin' for five year, and gared her believe she wes that usefu' he cudna want her, because Jess wud suner hae deed than gaen on the pairish.

"As for puir fouk, he wes clean redeeklus; there wesna a weedow in the Glen didna get her seed frae him in a bad year. He hed

abeelity in gaitherin', but he wes wastefu' in spendin'.

"Hooever, he 's gone noo, an' we maunna be sayin' ill o' the dead; it 's no what he wud hae dune himsel. Whatna day 's the beerial?" inquired Jamie, anxiously.

"Beerial? Losh preserve 's, Jamie," began Hillocks, but Drumsheugh understood.

"Jamie hes the richt o't; if Burnbrae hed slippit awa, yir faces cudna be langer. He 's no oot o' the Glen yet, and wha kens gin he mayna beat the factor yet?

"It 's no muckle we can dae in that quarter but there 's ae thing in oor poor. We can see that Burnbrae hes a gude roup, an' gin he maun leave us that he cairries eneuch tae keep him an' the gude wife for the rest o' their days.

"There 's a wheen fine fat cattle and some gude young horse; it wud be a sin tae let them gae below their price tae the Muirtown dealers. Na, na, the man that wants tae buy at Burnbrae's roup 'ill need tae pay."

The countenance of the kirkyard lifted, and as Hillocks followed Drumsheugh into kirk, he stopped twice and wagged his head with marked satisfaction. Three days later it was under-

stood at the "smiddy" that Burnbrae's roup was likely to be a success.

Thursday was the chosen day for roups in our parts, and on Monday morning they began to make ready at Burnbrae. Carts, engrained with the mud of years, were taken down to the burn, and came back blue and red. Burnbrae read the name of his grandfather on one of the shafts, and noticed it was Burnebrae in those days. Ploughs, harrows, rollers were grouped round a turnip sowing machine (much lent to neighbours), and supported by an array of forks, graips, scythes, and other lighter implements. The granary yielded a pair of fanners, half a dozen riddles, measures for corn, a pile of sacks, and some ancient flails. Harness was polished till the brass ornaments on the peaked collars and heavy cart saddles emerged from obscurity, and shone in the sunshine. Jean emptied her dairy, and ranged two churns, one her mother's, a cheese-press, and twenty-four deep earthenware dishes at the head of a field where the roup was to take place.

"Dinna bring oot yir dairy, Jean wumman," Burnbrae had pleaded in great distress; "we 'ill get some bit placey wi' a field or twa, and ye

'ill hae a coo as lang as ye live. A' canna bear tae see ma wife's kirn sold; ye mind hoo a' tried tae help ye the first year, an' ye splashed me wi' the milk. Keep the auld kirn, lass."

"Na, na, John, it wud juist fret me tae see it wi' nae milk tae fill it, for it 's no an ae-coo-kirn mine like a pendicler's (small farmer's), an' a' wud raither no look back aifter we 're awa'," but Jean's hands were shaking as she laid down the wooden stamp with which she had marked the best butter that went to Muirtown market that generation.

On Thursday forenoon the live-stock was gathered and penned in the field below the garden, where the dead lassie's name bloomed in fragrant mignonette. Burnbrae and Jean saw all their gear, save the household furniture, set out for sale. She had resolved to be brave for his sake, but every object in the field made its own appeal to her heart. What one read in the auctioneer's catalogue was a bare list of animals and implements, the scanty plenishing of a Highland farm. Jean saw everything in a golden mist of love. It was a perfectly preposterous old dogcart that ought to have been broken up long ago, but how often she had gone

in it to Muirtown on market days with John, and on the last journey he had wrapped her up as tenderly as when she was a young bride. The set of silver-plated harness—but there was not much plating left—Jean had bought from a Muirtown saddler with savings from her butter money, and had seen the ostler fit on the old mare—her foal, old enough himself now, was to be sold to-day—against John's coming from the cattle mart. He was so dazzled by the sheen of the silver that he passed his own conveyance in the stable yard—he never heard the end of that—and he could only shake his fist at her when she came from her hiding-place, professing great astonishment. John might laugh at her, but she saw the people admiring the turnout as they drove along the street in Muirtown, and, though it took them three hours to reach Burnbrae, the time was too short for the appreciation of that harness. It seemed yesterday, but that was seven-and-twenty year ago.

"Come intae the hoose, Jean," said Burnbrae, taking her by the arm; "it 's ower tryin' for ye; we maun hae oor half oor afore the roup begins."

Burnbrae and Jean never said a word about

such secret things, and indeed there was not in them a trace of Pharisee, but their children and the serving folk knew why the old people always disappeared after the midday meal.

"It's a black shame," said Bell to her neighbour as they cut up cheese for the roup, "tae cast sic a gude man oot o' his hame; deil tak' them that dae 't."

"Be quiet, wumman, or the maister 'ill hear ye; but ye're richt aboot whar they 'ill gang for meddling wi' the elder"—for they had not learned the Shorter Catechism, without profit, in Drumtochty.

When Brunbrae went out again, Jock Constable had arrived, and an old mare was being run up and down the field at such speed as a limp allowed.

"Keep her rinnin', laddie," Jock was shouting from the middle of the fat cattle; "she 'ill be as soople as a three-year-auld afore the fouk come."

"What's this ye're aifter wi' the mare, Jock?"

"Doctoring her stiffness, Burnbrae; it wears aff as sune as she gets warm, and the fouk micht as weel see her at her best.

"It 'ill pit a five-pund note on her," continued Jock, "an' a 'm no tae gie a warranty wi' onything the day.

"Man, hoo did ye no get the wricht tae gie those cairts a lick o' pent? They did it at Pitfoodles, and there wes an auld corn cairt went aff for new."

"Ye may dae what ye like at Pitfoodles, but ye'll play nae tricks here, Jock," and Burnbrae's eye had a dangerous gleam; "gin ye dinna tell the fouk that the mare hes a titch o' 'grease' on her aff hind-leg, a 'll dae it masel."

Jock was much dashed, for he had intended some other legitimate improvements, and he carried his wrongs to Drumsheugh.

"There 's sic a thing as bein' ower gude, an' a' dinna see ony use in startin' this roup; he micht as weel fling awa' his gear tae the first bidder. Wull ye believe it," said Jock, in bitterness of soul, "that he hesna providit a drop o' speerits, an' is gaein' tae offer the fouk tea an' lime-juice—lime-juice," and Jock dwelt on the word with scathing scorn.

"Did ye ever hear o' a roup comin' aff on sic like drink? It 's fifteen year sin a' took tae the unctioneerin' trade, an' a' tell ye nae man

'ill gie a bid worth mentionin' till he 's hed his tastin', an' there 's nae spunk afore the third gless.

"Noo there wes Pitfoodles roup," exclaimed Jock, harking back to high-water mark; "if a' didna send roond the glesses sax times, an' afore a' wes ower Lochlands bocht a geizened (leaky) water-cairt withoot wheels for aucht pund twal shillings, an' it 's lying at Pitfoodles till this day. Ye 'ill no see a roup like that twice in a generation. Lime-juice—it 's a clean temptin' o' Providence."

"Ye needna get in a feery-farry (commotion), Jock," said Drumsheugh, eyeing the little man severely; "the 'ill be nae call for speerits the day. A 'm no a jidge o' lime-juice masel, but it 'ill dae as weel as onything else, or water itsel for that maitter.

"Pitfoodles! Man, it 'ill no be mentioned wi' the prices ye 'ill get at Burnbrae, or a' dinna ken Drumtochty."

"Div ye mean that Drumtochty 's gaein' tae stand in?" said Jock, much cheered.

"A' mean what a' say, an' the suner ye begin the better. Ye 'ill be takin' the potatoes first," and the gait of Drumsheugh as he moved

off was that of a general on the morning of battle.

The dealers from Muirtown and outlying strangers from Kildrummie bore themselves after the time-honoured manners of a roup—a fine blend of jocose gaiety and business curiosity; but the Glen and stragglers from the upper districts were not in a roup mood, and seemed to have something on their minds. They greeted Burnbrae respectfully, and took a spare refreshment with marked solemnity. Their very faces chilled Jock when he began operations, and reduced to hopeless confusion an opening joke he had prepared on the way from Kildrummie. This severity was hard on Jock, for he was understood to have found his rôle in auctioneering, and a roup was the great day of his life. He was marked out for his office by the fact that he had been twice bankrupt as a farmer, and by a gift of speech which bordered on the miraculous. There were times when he was so carried on political questions in the Muirtown Inn that the meat flew from the end of his fork, and a Drumtochty man, with an understood reference to Jock's eloquence, could only say "Sall" at the Junction,

to which another would reply, "He 's an awfu' wratch." This tribute to Jock's power rested, as is evident, less on the exact terms of the eulogy than on his monopoly of the Drumtochty imagination for two hours. His adroitness in throwing strong points into relief and infirmities into the shade, as well as his accurate knowledge of every man's farming affairs and his insight into their peculiarities as buyers, were almost Satanic. People who did not intend to buy, and would have received no credit if they had, went to hear Jock selling a horse, and left fully rewarded. Indeed, if Whinnie suddenly chuckled on the way home, and did not proceed farther than "It cowes a'," he was understood to be chewing the cud of Jock's humour, and was excused from impossible explanations.

Jock referred to the Burnbrae roup as long as he lived, and gave incidents with dramatic force in the train, but every one knows he had nothing to do with its success.

"Ye needna waste time speaking the day, Jock," Drumsheugh advised before they began on the potatoes; "pit up the articles, and we 'ill see tae the bids." Which Drumtochty did

without one slack moment, from the potatoes, which fetched one pound an acre more than had been known in the parish, to a lot of old iron which a Kildrummie blacksmith got at something under cost price. People hesitated to award praise where all had done well, but the obstinacy of Hillocks, which compelled a Muirtown horse-dealer to give forty-two pounds for a young horse, and Whinnie's part in raising the prices for fat cattle, are still mentioned. When Jock came down from his table in the field, he was beyond speech, and Drumtochty regarded Drumsheugh with unfeigned admiration.

"Gude nicht tae ye, Burnbrae," said that great man, departing; "if ye hae tae gang it 'ill no be empty-handed," and although Burnbrae did not understand all, he knew that his neighbours had stood by him without stint that day.

For an hour the buyers were busy conveying away their goods, till at last the farm had been stripped of all the animal life that had made it glad, and those familiar articles that were each a link with the past. Burnbrae wandered through the staring sheds, the silent stable, the empty

granary, and then he bethought him of his wife. When her kirn was put up he had been moved by a sudden emotion and bought it back, and he saw her face for an instant between the bushes of the garden. Where was Jean? He sought her in the house, in the garden, and could not find her. Then he heard the rattle of a chain in one of the byres, and understood. Jean's favourite cow had been kept, and she was sitting in the stall with her, as one left desolate. When Burnbrae entered, Brownie turned her head and looked at him with an intelligent understanding in her soft, motherly eyes.

"She 's a' that 's left o' ma byre," and Jean burst into a passion of weeping. "Ye mind hoo they deed in the rinder-pest ane by ane, and were buried; juist Brownie cam through, and noo she 's alane again.

"That wes the judgment o' the Almichty, and we daurna complain, but this wes the doin' o' man, an' ma hert is bitter.

"A' the beasts a' reared, an' the gear we githered, a' sold and carried off, till there 's nae soond heard in the hooses, nae wark tae dae."

Burnbrae sat down and flung his arm round her, and as the two old heads were bent together, the gentle animal beside them missed her companions and moaned.

After a while Burnbrae began:

"It 's a shairp trial, wife, an' hard tae bear. But dinna forget oor mercies. We hae oor fower laddies left us, an' a' daein' weel.

"We oucht tae be thankfu' that Sandie 's been kept in the battle. Think o' yir son winnin' the Victoria Cross, wumman, an' ye 'ill see it on his breist.

"An' oor lassie 's safe, Jean . . . in the Auld Hame, an' . . . we 'ill sune be gaein' oorsels an' . . . the 'ill be nae pairtin' there.

"Ye hae me, Jean, an' a' hae ma ain gude wife, an' luve is mair than a' the things a man can see wi' his een or haud in his hands. Sae dinna be cast doon, lass, for nae hand can touch oor treasures or tak awa' oor luve."

When Jean was comforted, Burnbrae gathered his household together in the kitchen, and he chose the portion from the tenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel:

"Whosoever therefore shall confess Me be-

fore men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."

As Burnbrae read the last words he lifted up his head, and it seemed even unto the serving girls as if he had received a crown.

IV

THE APPEAL TO CÆSAR

THEY had the right to occupy their old home till Martinmas, but Jean had begun to fret, wandering through the empty "houses" and brooding over the coming trial.

"A' canna help it, John; the Almichty made a woman different from a man, an' the 'ill be nae peace for me till we be oot o' Burnbrae.

"Ma wark here 's feenished, an' it 's no like hame ony mair. A' wish the flittin' were ower an' you an' me were settled whar we 'ill end oor days."

Burnbrae had found a little place near Kildrummie that would leave him within reach of his kirk, which he had loved at a great cost, and his old neighbours, to whom he was knit with new ties.

"The Word can come onywhere tae the hert, an' the angel o' His Presence 'ill aye be wi' us, Jean, but there 's nae place whar the Evangel 'ill ever soond sae sweet as in the Free Kirk o' Drumtochty.

"We 'ill traivel up as lang as we 're able, and see oor friends aince a week. It 'ill dae us gude, wumman, tae get a handshak frae Netherton and Donald Menzies, an' Lachlan himsel, though he be a stiff chiel" (for this was before the transformation).

"Forbye the Auld Kirk folk, for a' dinna deny, Jean, aifter a' that 's happened, that it 'ill be pleasant tae meet them comin' wast, wi' Drumsheugh at their head.

"Ma hert 's warm tae a' body in the Glen, and a' ken they 'ill no forget us, Jean, in oor bit hoosie at Kildrummie."

One Thursday afternoon—the flitting was to be on Monday—Burnbrae came upon Jean in the garden, digging up plants and packing them tenderly with wide margins of their native earth.

"A' cudna leave them, John, an' they 'ill mak oor new gairden mair hame-like. The pinks are cuttin's a' set masel, an' the fuchsias tae,

an' Jeannie carried the can and watered them that simmer afore she deed.

"When Peter Robertson wes warnin' us no tae meddle wi' ony fixture for fear o' the factor, a' askit him aboot the floors, an' he said, 'Gin a' hed plantit them masel, they micht be lifted.' Gude kens a' did, every ane, though it 's no mony we can tak; but preserve 's, wha 's yon?"

It was not needful to ask, for indeed only one man in the parish could walk with such grave and stately dignity, and that because his father and grandfather had been parish ministers before him.

"This is rael neeburly, Doctor, an' like yersel tae come up afore we left the auld place. Ye 're welcome at Burnbrae as yir father wes in ma father's day. Ye heard that we 're flittin' on Monday?"

"Ye 're not away yet, Burnbrae, you 're not away yet; it 's not so easy to turn out a Drumtochty man as our English factor thought: we 're a stiff folk, and our roots grip fast.

"He was to rule this parish, and he was to do as he pleased with honest men; we 'll see who comes off best before the day is done,"

and the Doctor struck his stick, the stick of office with the golden head, on the gravel in triumph.

"You 've just come in time, Mrs. Baxter"—for Jean had been putting herself in order—"for I want to give you a bit of advice. Do not lift any more of your plants—it 's bad for their growth; and I rather think you 'll have to put them back."

Jean came close to Burnbrae's side, and watched the Doctor without breathing while he placed the stick against a bush, and put on his eye-glasses with deliberation, and opened out a telegram and read aloud: "'Paris. Your letter found me at last; leave London for home Thursday morning; tell Burnbrae to meet me in Muirtown on Friday. Kilspindie.'

"My letter went to Egypt and missed him, but better late than never, Burnbrae . . . that 's a wonderful plant you have there, Mrs. Baxter," and he turned aside to study a hydrangea Jean had set out in the sun; for with all his pompous and autocratic ways, the Doctor was a gentleman of the old school.

When he departed and Jean had settled

down, Burnbrae thought it wise to moderate her joy lest it should end in bitter disappointment.

"The Doctor hes dune his pairt, and it wes kind o' him tae come up himsel ane 's errand tae tell us. Ye didna see his face aifter he read the message, but it wes worth seein'. There 's no a soonder hert in the Glen.

"A' kent this thing wudna hae happened gin his Lordship hed been at hame, an' a 'm thinkin he wud dae his best tae repair it.

"Maybe he 'ill gie 's the first chance o' a vacant fairm, but a' doot we maun leave Burnbrae; they say 'at it 's as gude as let tae a Netheraird man."

"Dinna say that, John, for it 's no anither fairm, it 's Burnbrae a' want. A 'll be watchin' the mornin's evening when ye come up the road, an' a 'll see ye turnin' the corner. Ye 'll wave yir airm tae me gin a' be richt, an' Jeannie's floors 'ill be back in their beds afore ye be hame."

When Burnbrae appeared at Kildrummie station next morning, Drumtochty, who happened to be there in force on their last Muirtown visit before harvest, compassed him with

observances, putting him in the corner seat, and emphasising his territorial designation.

"That wes michty news aboot the Sergeant, Burnbrae," began Jamie Soutar; "it spiled a nicht's sleep tae me readin' hoo he stude ower the Colonel and keepit the Afghans at bay till the regiment rallied. Wes 't four or sax he focht single-handed?"

"He barely mentioned the maitter in his letters, but his captain wrote tae the gude wife, which wes rael thochtfu'; he made it sax, an' he said the regiment wes prood o' Sandie." For an instant Burnbrae drew himself up in his corner, and then he added, "But it 's no for his father tae be speakin' this wy. Sandie did naethin' but his duty."

"For doonricht leein'," said Jamie meditatively, "a' never kent the marra (equal) o' thae London papers; they made oot that Sandie wes a hero, and we cleaned the Muirtown book-stall lest Friday a week. A' never saw the Kildrummie train in sic speerits; it 's awfu' hoo country fouk are deceived."

"Piggie Walker cam up on Monday" (Hillocks seemed to be addressing some person above Burnbrae's head), "and he wes tellin'

me they hed a by-ordinar' sermon frae the student. 'A wished Burnbrae hed been there,' Piggie said; 'he wes boond tae be lifted. He 'ill sune hae a kirk, yon lad, an' a gude ane.' Piggie 's a body, but he 's coonted the best jidge o' sermons in Kildrummie."

Drumsheugh alone did not join in those kindly efforts, but struck out a manner of his own, chuckling twice without relevancy, and once growing so red that Hillocks ran over his family history to estimate the risk of a "seizure."

"Is that you, Burnbrae? Come in, man; come in. It 's a pleasure to see a Drumtochty face again after those foreign fellows," and Lord Kilspindie gripped his tenant's hand in the factor's office. "Sit down and give me all your news.

"Th 'ill be no speaking to Mrs. Baxter now after this exploit of the Sergeant's! When I read it on my way home I was as proud as if he had been my own son. It was a gallant deed, and well deserves the Cross. He 'ill be getting his commission some day. Lieutenant Baxter! That 'ill stir the Glen, eh?

"But what is this I hear of your leaving

Burnbrae? I don't like losing old tenants, and I thought you would be the last to flit."

"Did the factor not tell you, my Lord——"

"I 've only seen him for five minutes, and he said it had nothing to do with rent; it was some religious notion or other. Is that so?"

"The fairm is worth thirty pund mair rent, an' a' wud hae paid saxty rather than leave my auld hame; but the factor made it a condeetion tae gie up ma kirk."

"Well, Burnbrae, I never thought you would have left me for a matter of kirks. Could you not have stretched a point for auld lang syne?" and Kilspindie looked hard at the old man.

"Ma Lord, there 's naething a' wudna hae dune to stay in Burnbrae but this ae thing. Ye hae been a gude landlord tae me as the auld Earl wes tae ma father, an' it 'ill never be the same tae me again on anither estate; but ye maunna ask me tae gang back on ma conscience."

The tears came to Burnbrae's eyes, and he rose to his feet.

"A' thocht," he said, "when yir message cam, that maybe ye hed anither mind than yir

factor, and wud send me back tae Jean wi' guid news in ma mooth.

"Gin it be yir wull that we flit, a 'll mak nae mair complaint, an' there 's nae bitterness in ma hert. But a' wud like ye tae ken that it 'ill be a sair pairtin'.

"For twa hundred years an' mair there 's been a Baxter at Burnbrae and a Hay at Kilspindie; ane wes juist a workin' farmer, an' the ither a belted earl, but gude freends an' faithfu', an', ma Lord, Burnbrae wes as dear tae oor fouk as the castle wes tae yours.

"A' mind that day the Viscount cam o' age, an' we gaithered tae wush him weel, that a' saw the pictures o' the auld Hays on yir walls, an' thocht hoo mony were the ties that bund ye tae yir hame.

"We haena pictures nor gouden treasures, but there 's an' auld chair at oor fireside, an' a' saw ma grandfather in it when a' wes a laddie at the schule, an' a' mind him tellin' me that his grandfather hed sat in it lang afore. It 's no worth muckle, an' it 's been often mended, but a 'll no like tae see it carried oot frae Burnbrae.

"There is a Bible, tae, that hes come doon, father tae son, frae 1690, and ilka Baxter hes

written his name in it, an' 'farmer at Burnbrae,' but it 'ill no be dune again, for oor race 'ill be awa frae Burnbrae for ever.

"Be patient wi' me, ma Lord, for it 's the lest time we 're like tae meet, an' there 's anither thing a' want tae say, for it 's heavy on ma hert.

"When the factor told me within this verra room that we maun leave, he spoke o' me as if a' hed been a lawless man, an' it cut me mair than ony ither word.

"Ma Lord, it 's no the men that fear their God that 'ill brak the laws, an' a ken nae Baxter that wes ither than a loyal man tae his King and country.

"Ma uncle chairged wi' the Scots Greys at Waterloo, and a' mind him tellin', when a' wes a wee laddie, hoo the Hielanders cried oot, 'Scotland for ever,' as they passed.

"I needna tell ye aboot ma brither, for he wes killed by yir side afore Sebastopol, and the letter ye send tae Burnbrae is keepit in that Bible for a heritage.

"A 'll mention naethin' aither o' ma ain laddie, for ye 've said mair than wud be richt for me, but we coont it hard that when oor

laddie hes shed his blude like an honest man for his Queen, his auld father and mither sud be driven frae the hame their forbears hed for seeven generations."

Lord Kilspindie rose to his feet at the mention of Sebastopol, and now went over to the window as one who wished to hide his face.

"Dinna be angry with me, ma Lord, nor think a 'm boastin', but a' cudna thole that ye sud think me a lawbreaker, wha cared naither for kirk nor commonweal," and still his Lordship did not move.

"It gaes tae ma hert that we sud pairt in anger, an' if a 've said mair than a' oucht, it wes in sorrow, for a 'll never forget hoo lang ma fouk hae lived on yir land, and hoo gude ye hae been tae me," and Burnbrae turned to the door.

"You 're the dullest man in all Drumtochty," cried Kilspindie, wheeling round—one might have fancied—but that is absurd—"and the truest. Did you think that a Hay would let a Baxter go for all the kirks that ever were built? You supposed that I wanted you to play the knave for your farm, and this was the news you were to carry home to Jean; it 's too bad of you, Burnbrae."

"Ma Lord, a' . . . ye ken——"

"It 's all right, and I 'm only joking; and the play was carried on a bit too long for both of us, but I wanted to hear your own mind upon this matter," and Kilspindie called for the factor.

"Is the Burnbrae lease drawn up?"

"It is, at an advance of sixty pounds, and I 've got a man who will sign it, and says he will give no trouble about kirks; in fact, he 'll just do . . . ah . . . well, whatever we tell him."

"Quite so; most satisfactory sort of man. Then you 'll reduce the rent to the old figure, and put in the name of John Baxter, and let it be for the longest period we ever give on the estate."

"But, Lord Kilspindie . . . I . . . did you know——"

"Do as I command you without another word," and his Lordship was fearful to behold. "Bring the lease here in ten minutes, and place it in Mr. Baxter's hands. What I've got to say to you will keep till afterwards.

"Sit down, old friend, sit down; . . . it was my blame. . . . I ought to be horse-whipped. . . . Drink a little water. You 're better now.

. . . I 'll go and see that fellow has no tricks in the conditions." But he heard Burnbrae say one word to himself, and it was "Jean."

"There are mony things a' wud like tae say, ma Lord," said Burnbrae before he left, "but a full hert maks few words. Gin lifting a dark cloud aff the life o' a family an' fillin' twa auld fouk wi' joy 'ill gie ony man peace, ye 'ill sleep soond this nicht in yir castle.

"When ye pass below Burnbrae on yir way to the Lodge and see the smoke curlin' up through the trees, ye 'ill ken a family 's livin' there that bless yir name, and will mention it in their prayers."

The first man Burnbrae met when he came out with the lease in his pocket was Drumsheugh, whose business that particular day had kept him wandering up and down the street for nearly an hour.

"Keep 's a', Burnbrae, is that you? a' thocht ye were dune wi' that office noo. It 's a puir market the day; the dealers are getting the fat cattle for naethin'." But Drumsheugh's manner had lost its calm finish.

"A 've something tae tell," said Burnbrae, "an' ye sud be the first tae hear it. Lord Kil-

spindie 's hame again, and hes settled me and mine in the auld place for a tack that 'ill laist ma days and descend tae ma son aifter me.

" This hes been a shairp trial, and there were times a' wes feared ma faith micht fail ; but it's ower noo, and there 's twa men Jean an' me 'ill remember wi' gratitude till we dee ; ane is Doctor Davidson an' the ither is yersel. Ye brocht us through atween ye."

" Come awa this meenut tae the ' Kilspindie Airms,' " and Drumsheugh seized Burnbrae; " a' ken ye wunna taste, but a 'll dae it for ye; and ye 'ill eat, at ony rate," and Drumsheugh, who was supposed to dine in secret places at not more than a shilling, ordered a dinner fit for Lord Kilspindie. He did his best to get full value for his money, but before and after, and between the courses, he let himself go at large.

" Ane and twenty year at a hundred and auchty pund ; man, ye 'ill have eneuch tae stock a fairm for Jamie and furnish the student's manse.

" His Lordship wes lang o' comin' hame, but, ma certes, he 's pit things richt when he did

come. It 's naethin' short o' handsome, an' worthy o' the Earl.

"Me," resumed Drumsheugh, "a' hed naethin' tae dae wi 't; it wes the Doctor's letter 'at did the business; here 's tae his health; is yir soda water dune yet?

"The factor tried tae mak licht o' him that day, an' spak as if he wes abune a' body in Drumtochty; he threatened the minister tae his face; a' herd him, the upsettin', ill-mannered wratch.

"'Dinna be cast doon,' says the Doctor tae me ootside; 'ye hevna seen the end o' this game.' The man disna live 'at can beat the Doctor when his birse is up, an' a' never saw him sae roosed afore.

"Whar 's the factor noo?" burst out Drumsheugh afresh. "Man, a' wud hae liked tae see him when he brocht in the lease. 'I wes here before ye, and I will be here aifter ye,' said the Doctor. It 'ill come true; a' gie the factor a month, no anither week.

"It 's wersh drink ye hae, but dinna spare it. This is no an ordinar' day. A' wish we were at the Junction."

Drumsheugh restrained himself till the Dun-

leith train had fairly gone—for he knew better than to anticipate an occasion—and then he gathered Drumtochty round him.

"Ye herd that the factor ordered Burnbrae tae leave his kirk, weel, it 'ill be a while or he meddle wi' anither man: an' Burnbrae wes tae be turned oot o' his fairm, it's the factor, a 'm judgin', an' no Burnbrae, 'at 'ill need tae seek a hame; an' the factor wudna gie a lease for fifteen year, he 's hed tae mak it oot for ane and twenty; an' he wudna tak a rack rent o' saxty pund increase tae let Burnbrae bide in his hoose, an' his Lordship 'ill no tak a penny mair than the auld rent. That 's ma news, fouk, an' it 's the best a 've herd for mony a day."

Then they all shook hands with Burnbrae, from Netherton to Peter Bruce, and they called in an outer fringe of Kildrummie to rejoice with them; but Burnbrae could only say:

"Thank ye, freends, frae ma hert; ye 've been gude neeburs tae me and mine."

"It 's been a michty victory," said Jamie Soutar, as they moved to the third, "but a' can see drawbacks."

"Ay, ay," which was a form of inquiry with Hillocks.

"Naebody 'ill be able tae tell a lee or play a Judas trick in Drumtochty for the space of a generation."

V

THE REPLENISHING OF BURNBRAE

WHEN Hillocks arrived at the kirkyard on the Sabbath after Cæsar's judgment, he found Jamie Soutar removing the last trace of Burnbrae's Displenishing Sale from the pillars of the gate.

It was the fragment with "John Baxter, outgoing tenant," and Jamie was careful to preserve it entire.

"It 'ill be a relic," he explained afterwards to the fathers, who were tasting the occasion in a pregnant silence, "like a Russian gun frae Alma. We 'ill no see anither fecht like it in oor day.

"Jock wes a wee hasty wi' his 'out-going,' but ye cudna expect a Kildrummie man tae ken ony better. He 's gotten the gift o' the gab maist awfu', but an unctioneer sudna tak tae propheceein' ; it 's no cannie.

"But we maunna blame Jock, for there wes

a story fleein' aboot that the factor hed got a new fairmer for Burnbrae; he 'ill be the incomin' tenant, a 'm judgin'; he 'ill be comin' in as the factor gaes oot.

"Speakin' aboot that, hae ye herd the new factor's name? they were keepin' it quiet on Friday," and Jamie looked round with much interest.

"Ye 've a tongue, Jamie," and Drumsheugh laughed aloud, a luxury hardly known in the Glen, while even Gormack himself made a joyful noise within like the running down of an eight-day clock.

"It 's an ill job weel ended," resumed Hillocks, recalling the fathers to sobriety, "an' Burnbrae 's gotten his fairm back; but it 's bare the day, withoot a beast tae pit in the byres this winter, or a ploo tae turn the stubble.

"Nae doot he hed a graund sale, and the fat cattle cowed a'thing for price, but stockin' ower again 'll be a heavy loss; it 's a terrible peety his lordship wesna hame suner."

Then they went into matters thoroughly, and Drumsheugh gave judgment.

"Gin he hed back his implements, and Jean's

coos, an' some o' the auld horse, an' maybe a dozen stirk, h 'd come oot richt aifter a' ; a' didna hear the dealers boastin' aboot their bargains laist Friday," he added with satisfaction.

There was a long pause in the conversation, during which Drumsheugh examined a loose slate on the roof of the church from three different points of view, and Jamie Soutar refreshed his remembrance of a neighbouring tombstone.

"Div ye mean?" began Whinnie, but broke off at the contempt in Jamie's eye.

"Sall," Hillocks exclaimed in a little. "What think ye, Gormack?"

"They 're no veeciously inclined fouk in the Glen," responded that worthy man, with studied moderation. "A' wudna say but it micht be dune. Maist o' what we 're aifter is in the Glen, some hole or ither. It wud croon a'," and Gormack began to warm.

"Nae fear o' the implements," said Hillocks, in full scent, "nor the puckle young beasts, but a 'll no be satisfeed, neeburs, gin the gude wife disna get back her byre tae the last coo."

"A 've twa stirks," interrupted Whinnie, taking in the situation at last.

"Haud yir tongue till a' coont up the kye," and Hillocks buckled to work.

"It 's an aucht byre, and Jean keepit ane; that leaves seeven tae collect; noo a' hae twa masel, an' Netherton bocht the quey; that 's three a' richt.

"Didna ye get the Angus doddie, Drumsheugh? weel, ye 'ill no be hard tae deal wi'; an' Bogie took anither—he 's no here, but he 's a cautious man, Bogie; there 's nae fear o' him. That 's five.

"Whar 's the lave? Ou aye, a' mind Mary Robertson scrapit up eneuch for the white coo, a fine milker; it wud hardly be richt, maybe, tae ask her——"

"Ae coo as gude 's anither tae Mary," broke in Drumsheugh. "A 'll see she disna lose."

"Weel, that 's a' richt," Hillocks went on; "and we 've juist tae find anither, and that 's the hale hypothic."

"It 's no ill tae find," said Jamie, "but it 'ill beat ye tae get her."

"Ye 're no meanin'— man,—ye hev it; the body did buy ane, an' he 'ill be wantin' twa or

three notes on the bargain; Milton 's a fair scannal in the Glen," and Hillocks's countenance, a near enough man in season himself, was full of scorn.

"A 'm astonished at ye," and Jamie eyed Hillocks with severity; "div ye no ken that Milton is the only man in the Glen that hes ony licht ava? he 's sae releegious that a' never herd o' him daein' a dirty trick, but his conscience telt him. It 'ill cost five notes tae mak his duty plain."

"If Milton disna gie back the beast at the roup price, in the circumstances——"

"Aye, aye, Drumsheugh," said Hillocks encouragingly.

"Weel, he needna show his face in the Kildrummie train, that 's a'; ye have yir aucht complete noo, Hillocks, an' a 'll cast ma mind ower the implements in the sermon."

"A 'll drive doon the twa stirks the morn's morn," for Whinnie was anxious to show his zeal.

"Ye 'll dae naethin' o' the kind," responded Jamie. "Burnbrae's plenishing gaed awa in a day, and it 'ill gae back in a day. Drumsheugh, ye begun the wark, and ye 'ill hae tae feenish it."

"A 'll dae the Glen by Wednesday nicht, an' a'thing 'ill need tae be hame by Thursday, or Burnbrae 'ill be in at Muirtown on Friday githerin' stock. Ye 'ill keep a quiet tongue, neeburs."

"Lippen (trust) tae that, Drumsheugh," Jamie answered; "it 's easier than speakin' in Drumtochty."

Drumsheugh was wrapped in thought till the Doctor came to the application, when his face lightened, and he took snuff with leisurely satisfaction.

"There wes a set o' harrows," he admitted to Jamie afterwards, "near beat me; they 're doon Dunleith wy, but a 'll hae a haud o' them."

For three days the Glen was full of mystery, and the latest news of the campaign could be had at the smiddy.

Saunders, Drumsheugh's foreman, came with some machine teeth on Monday evening, and brought the first intelligence.

"The maister 's in frae the wast end, and he 's no hed a single refusal; yon Dunleith fairmer that cam on the dun sheltie (pony) wes that pleased at Brunbrae getting his fairm again, he offered back the harrows himsel, and

is tae send up a single ploo an' a pair o' fanners 'at gied doon yon wy.

"Drumsheugh 's tae be oot at five the morn, an' he 's expeckin' tae sweep the Glen," and Saunders struck a match with emphasis.

"It beats a'," said the smith, amazed at Saunders's continued speech; "the Glen 's fair roosed."

On Wednesday evening Drumsheugh was his own messenger, but would only speak in parables.

"Gin this weather keeps on, they 'ill be cuttin' roads for the machines by the end o' the week. . . . A 'll need tae be aff, it 's gettin' late, and a 've hed twa days o 't. . . . There 's a fell puckle fairms in the pairish, aince ye gae roond them. . . .

"Na, na, there 's waur fouk in the coonty than oor neeburs," and now every one listened with both his ears; "the fac is, there 's no ae disobleeging, ill-condeetioned wratch in Drumtochty, or ane that wudna dae his pairt by a gude man." Whereupon the smith struck a mighty blow, and the sparks flew to the roof in celebration of a great achievement.

"It 's a broon and white caufie ye hev,

smith," were Drumsheugh's last words. "Ye micht bring it up the mornin's aifternoon aboot fower, and slip it intae the park afore the hoose."

"That 's the stiffest job Drumsheugh ever pit his hand tae, an' he 's dune it weel," and then the smith meditated, "hoo did he ever get roond Milton?"

Hillocks came in late and threw some light on that problem.

"A' met Drumsheugh comin' doon frae Milton, and a' lookit at him.

"'The 'ill be nane o' Jean's byre missin' the morn, Hillocks.'

"That 's a' he said, but his face wes as red as the harvest mune, and you wud hae thocht tae see his walk that he wes the Earl o' Kilspindie."

Burnbrae was afterwards amazed at the duplicity of Drumtochty, which compassed him with lies and befooled him on every hand, in his local efforts to restock his farm. Hillocks declined to treat for restoration till he knew how prices stood on Friday, and Netherton, his fellow-elder, was doubtful whether he could let him have two carts, while Drumsheugh refused politely but firmly to cancel his purchase

in cows. Drumtochty was triumphant over Burnbrae's victory, and full of sympathy with him in his position, but there were limits to kindness, and the Glen meant to stick by their bargains.

"It's no what a' wud hae expeckit o' the neeburs, an' least o' a' frae Drumsheugh," Jean complained, as she sat on Thursday afternoon in the garden. Burnbrae had just returned from a very disappointing visit to Donald Menzies, who expounded a recent conflict with the devil in minute detail, but would not come within a mile of business.

"We maunna judge the fouk hardly," said Burnbrae; "a bargain 's a bargain; they gave top prices, an' nae doot they wantit what they bocht. They did their pairt at the roup, an' it wud be unreasonable tae ask mair," but Burnbrae was inwardly perplexed.

An hour afterwards James Soutar explained to Jean that he happened to be passing, and thought he would give them "a cry," and ended by dragging Burnbrae off to the most distant field on the farm to decide when a patch of oats he had bought in the roup would be ready for the scythe. He then settled on a dyke, and for

two hours fought the great war over again from beginning to end, with a keen dramatic instinct and an amazing flow of caustic commentary.

"A 'll no deny," when Burnbrae compelled him to return for tea, "that a 'm disappointed in the fouk sin laist Friday. They micht hae let their bargains gae an' sent ye up the rough o' the stockin'.

"Noo gin a' hed been the like o' Drumsheugh," and Jamie again came to a halt, "a' wud hae scorned tae keep onything ye needed, but they 're grippy, there 's nae doot o' that, in Drumtochty; a 've thocht mony a time . . . is yon a cairt comin' up the road?

"If it 's no a load o' implements and cairt-harness! It 's terribly like Saunders frae Drumsheugh, but there 's nae use cryin', for he 'ill no lat on he hears.

"Sall," continued Jamie, as they struck the track, "there 's been mair than ae cairt up here; an' a' didna see ye hed cattle in the gairden field as we passed."

"Naither a' hev; there 's no a leevin' beast on the place forbye puir Brownie. A' canna mak it oot!" and Burnbrae quickened his steps.

Donald Menzies's son passed with a bridle, as

if he had left a horse behind him, and Gormack met them on horseback, as if he had come with a cart, but, beyond the weather, they had nothing to say. Whinnie was wrestling with two stirks to get them into a field—with the result that one went up the road and another down, after the manner of their kind—and had no leisure for conversation. A large roller had stuck in the last gate, and young Netherton was not in a mood to answer questions.

"Ask Drumsheugh," was all that could be got out of him as he backed his horse first one way and then the other.

"Ma opeenion," said Jamie solemnly, "is that Drumtochty's gaen geit (crazy). Did ye ever see the like o' that?"

The farmhouse and other buildings made a square, and Burnbrae stood beyond speech or motion at the sight which met his eyes. The "ports" of the cart-shed, that had been a yawning void when he left, were filled once more with two carts in each—his own well-mended carts—the one behind, with the trams on the ground and the one before, suspended from the roof by the chain saddle; and if Piggie Walker was not unharnessing a pony from the old dog-

cart in the turnip-shed. The greys that made the second pair—but they were really white—and which he had grudged selling far more than the young horses, came up from the water and went sedately into the stable. Through the door he could see that Jean's byre was nearly full, and outside two calves had settled down to supper upon a guano bag with much relish. Saunders, Baxter and Tammas Mitchell were shouldering the fanners into the corn room, while the servant lassies, quite off their heads with excitement, were carrying in the dairy dishes that some cart had left. The courtyard was strewn with implements, and in the centre stood Drumsheugh full of power and forcible speech, a sight never to be forgotten.

"Hurry up wi' the fanners, lads, and yoke on the ploos, pit the harrows in the cairt-shed, an' hang thae saidles in the stable; ye micht gie the horses a feed, and see the coos hae a bite o' grass.

"Cairry that harness into the hoose, Piggie, the wife keeps it hersel; man, a' forgot tae gie ye a word; hoo did ye hear? onywy, it wes neeburly tae gie back the auld dogcairt.

"Jamie Soutar hes wiled the gude man oot o'

the road, but he 'ill sune be back, an' we maun hae the place snod afore he comes."

Then he saw Burnbrae and Jamie, and raged furiously.

"It 's maist aggravatin' that some fouk 'ill come when they 're no wantit, an' stan' glowerin' till ye wud think they hed never seen a fairm toon redd (cleaned) up in their life.

"The fac is," and Drumsheugh relapsed into private life, "the neeburs thocht ye micht be the better of some o' yir plenishin' back tae begin wi', an' the maist o' what 's in the Glen 'ill be here afore nicht.

"Dinna say a word aboot it; it wud hae been a disgrace tae see ye buyin' in the Muirtown market, an' yir goods on oor fairms. We 're hard, but we 're no sae mean as that. Whup that reapin' machine oot o' the road, Tammas," shouted Drumsheugh, creating a skilful diversion for Burnbrae's benefit.

Two cows came round the corner, and made for their byre with the air of persons glad to find themselves in familiar surroundings after discomposing adventures in foreign parts. Hawkie stepped aside at the door to allow Queenie to enter first, for there is a strict order

of precedence among cows, and however it might have been disregarded in strange byres, good manners must be observed at home.

Three minutes later Hillocks sauntered in with explanations.

"They kent their ain road as sune as we got sicht o' the hooses; it 's a fine hairst day, Drumsheugh; is the byre fillin'?"

"It 's full, man; the laist coo 's in, and Burnbrae 's aff tae tell the gude wife; naebody hes failed, Hillocks, an' a 'm expectin' the ministers up every minute."

Jean was utterly dazed, and Burnbrae knew not what to do with her. Between the going and the coming her strength had given, and she could only sit motionless except when she wiped the tears from her cheeks.

"If Doctor Davidson isna comin' up the near road wi' Maister Cunningham. Drumsheugh 's telt them, a 'll wager, and they 're comin' tae wush us weel.

"It 's a terrible peety, Jean, ye 're no able tae see them," continued Burnbrae, with great cunning; "they wud nearly need tae get their tea comin' sae far, an' Drumsheugh tae, for he 's hed an aifternune.

"But it canna be helpit noo, an' of coorse the 'ill be naethin' for them; a 'll juist say ye 're no yersel the day, an' tell the lassies tae bring in a jug o' milk," and Burnbrae made for the door.

"Wud ye daur tae send onybody awa frae oor hoose this day withoot brakin' bread, tae say naethin' o' the ministers?" and Jean was already hunting for her best dress. "Gae doon this meenut an' show them ower the place, an', John, man, keep them awa for an 'oor."

When the party returned from their round all things were ready, and Jean received the company in her black silk and a cap that called forth the warm congratulations of the doctor.

It was a meal to be remembered, and remained a date for calculation while the old people lived. Twenty times at least did Jean apologise for its imperfection—the scones which wanted more firing and the butter that was soft through heat—and as many times did the doctor declare with solemnity that he never expected to taste the like again till he returned to Burnbrae. Seven times exactly did Jean go out to supplement the table with forgotten dainties, and once she was so long away that Drumsheugh accused her of visiting the byre.

"No likely wi' this goon on. It 's plain ye ken little o' women fouk, Drumsheugh."

"Ye juist keekit in, a 'm thinkin', tae see that the hale aucht were in their sta's, eh, gude wife?" and when Jean's face pled guilty, Burnbrae laughed joyfully, and declared that "the elder wes comin' on," and that "they micht see a mistress in Drumsheugh yet."

They all did their part, but it was agreed that the doctor excelled beyond competition. He told his best stories in a way that amazed even his faithful elder, while Drumsheugh and Burnbrae watched for the coming point to honour it with vociferous applause, and again would deploy in front to draw forth another favourite. No one could have felt happy if Mr. Cunningham had taken to anecdotage, but his honest effort to follow the lead and be in at the death with each story was delightful. Once also he threw in a quotation from the Georgics, which the doctor declared the cleverest thing he had ever heard, and the abashed man became the object of silent admiration for sixty seconds. One of the lassies, specially dressed for the occasion, was continually bringing in hot water and reserve tea-pots, till the doctor accused

Drumsheugh of seven cups, and threatened him with the session for immoderate drinking; and Drumsheugh hinted that the doctor was only one short himself. Simple fooling of country folk, that would sound very poor beside the wit of the city, but who shall estimate the love in Burnbrae's homely room that evening?

When at last the doctor rose to go, in spite of Jean's last remonstrance that he had eaten nothing, Burnbrae said he would like the ministers to take the reading that night, and then they all went into the kitchen, which had been made ready. A long table stood in the centre, and at one end lay the old family Bible; round the table gathered Burnbrae's sons and the serving lads and women. Doctor Davidson motioned to the Free Church minister to take his place at the head.

"This is your family, and your elder's house."

But Cunningham spoke out instantly with a clear voice:

"Doctor Davidson, there is neither Established nor Free Church here this night; we are all one in faith and love, and you were ordained before I was born."

"I thank you, sir, for this honour," said the

doctor, and Drumsheugh said that he had never seen him look so pleased.

He was already selecting the psalm, when Burnbrae asked leave to say a word, and there was such a stillness that the ticking of the clock in the lobby was heard over the kitchen.

"It isna needfu' for me tae tell ye, freends, that my mind is wi' the Free Kirk in her contention, and a' houp for grace tae obey ma licht as lang as a' live.

"Nae man's conscience, hooever, is a law tae his neebur, but every man maun follow the guidance o' the Speerit; an' gin a' hev said a hasty or bitter word against the Auld Kirk, or called her ony unworthy name thae past years, a' want tae say that nane regrets it mair than a' dae masel, and it becomes me, this nicht, tae ask yir pardon."

"You never did anything of the kind, Burnbrae," said the doctor huskily. "I wish to God we were all as good men," and the Free Kirk elder and the Moderate minister clasped hands across the open Bible. Then the doctor cleared his throat with great majesty, and gave out the Hundred-and-thirty-third Psalm:

"Behold how good a thing it is,
And how becoming well,
Together, such as brethren are
In unity to dwell."

And the sweet sound of Eastgate floated out on the peaceful air of the Glen, where the harvest moon was shining upon fields of gold.

A MANIFEST JUDGMENT

A MANIFEST JUDGMENT

WHEN the practice of Drumtochty was advertised, and the duties defined by geography—the emoluments being treated with marked reserve—the medical profession did not contend in a body for the post, and it was more than a year before William Maclure had a successor. During the interregnum temporary physicians of varied experience and erratic character took charge of our health for short periods, and the Glen had experiences which are still fondly cherished, and afforded Elspeth Macfadyen the raw material for some of her most finished products. One of these worthies was a young gentleman twenty-four years of age and of Irish descent, whose thirst for fees and hatred of anything beyond the minimum of labour bordered on genius. It was he who declined to enter Lizzie Taylor's house, although sent for in the most interesting circumstances,

and discoursed outside the door with a volubility that seemed almost Satanic, till he had received an earnest of ten shillings in fourteen coins of the realm. Perhaps the Glen was more indignant when Dr. O'Bralligan declined to rise one night and go to Glen Urtach, "not even if his sainted grandmother came to ask him, riding on the back of the Angel Gabriel."

"It 'ill no be Gabriël 'at 'ill tak chairge o' him," said James Soutar succinctly. And the feeling in the kirkyard was so decided that O'Bralligan left within a week, explaining to Peter Bruce at the Junction that the people of Drumtochty were the "most oudacious and onreasonable set o' blackguards" he had ever seen.

His successor had enjoyed the remarkable privilege of ministering in a fleeting capacity to the health of sixty-three parishes during a professional practice of under twenty years, and retained through all vicissitudes a pronounced Glasgow accent, and an unquenchable thirst for distilled liquors. Dr. Murchieson was not greedy about fees, and had acquired considerable skill in his eventful life, so the Glen endured him for three months, but used him with precautions.

"Gin ye catch him gaein' east," Hillocks summed up, "he 's as quiet a man as ye wud wish, and skilly tae, but comin' wast he 's clean redeeklus; last nicht," added Hillocks, "he wes carryin' his hat on the pint o' his stick an' singin' 'Scots wha hae.'"

An unaccountable tendency in certain states of mind to prescribe calomel tried the patience of the Glen, and Gormack conceived a personal prejudice against Murchieson because he had ordered him to be blistered with croton oil till he returned next day, when Gormack had a "titch" of bronchitis; but his cup ran over the night he sounded a pillow instead of Maggie Martin's lungs, and gave her mother no hope.

"Congested frae top tae bottom; nae whasle (rales) at a' the day; naethin' can be dune; a fine lassie," and he departed, after a brief nap, full of music.

Hillocks drove him to the station, and he seemed to bear no grudge.

"That maks saxty-fower—a 've forgotten the names, but a' keep the coont."

His farewell was divided between a generous appreciation of Drumtochty and an unfeigned

regret that Kildrummie had no refreshment-room.

"Ilka trade hes some ne'er-dae-weels, an' the doctors hae fewer than maist. Ye canna expect onything else frae thae orra craturs," said Drumsheugh next Sabbath, "an' we 're better withoot them. It passes me hoo yon body stude it, for he wes aye tastin'."

"He didna stand it," broke in Hillocks with eagerness; "div ye ken hoo mony whups he 's hed? 'A 've been saxty-fower times,' he says to me at Kildrummie; a' doot he wes exaggeratin', though."

"Been what, Hillocks?" inquired Jamie with keen interest.

"Ye ken what a 'm ettlin' aifter fine, Jamie, an' it 's no a chancy word tae mention."

"Wes 't *locum tenens?*"

"That," said Hillocks, "is the word, if ye maun hae it; a' wunner the body 's no feared; it 's an awfu' business," and Hillocks dropped into morals, "when a man canna manage his drink."

Jamie declared that he had never seen the kirkyard so overcome, and ever afterwards Hillocks's name suggested sudden and capti-

vating strokes of humour, so that men's faces lit up at the sight of him.

It was in these circumstances that the Glen fell back on Kirsty Stewart for medical aid, with the Kildrummie doctor as a last resort, and Kirsty covered her name with glory for a generation. She had always had some reputation as a practitioner of ability and experience —being learned in herbs, and the last of her folk; but her admirers were themselves astonished at the insight she showed in the mysterious illness of Peter MacIntosh, and her very detractors could only insinuate that her credit ended with diagnosis. His case had a certain distinction from the first day he complained, and we remembered afterwards that it was never described as a "whup." During the first week even there was a vague impression in the Glen, conveyed by an accent, that Peter was the subject of a dispensation, and the kirkyard was full of chastened curiosity.

"What 's this that 's wrang wi' Peter MacIntosh, Whinnie?" broke out Drumsheugh, with a certain magisterial authority. "Ye live near him, and sud hae the richts o't. As for the fouk doon bye, ye can get naethin' oot o'

them; the smith juist shook his head twa nichts syne, as if he wes at a beerial."

"Ye needna speir at me, Drumsheugh," responded Whinnie, with solemnity, "for a' ken nae mair than ye dae yersel, though oor fields mairch and we 've aye been neeburly."

"Losh keep 's, ye surely can tell us whar it 's catchit Peter; is 't in his head or his heels? is he gaein' aboot or hes he ta'en tae his bed? did ye no see him?" said Drumsheugh severely.

"Ou aye, a' saw him, gin that be onything; but ye canna get muckle oot o' Peter at the best, and he 's clean past speakin' noo.

"He wes sittin' in his chair afore the door, an' a' he said wes, 'This is an awfu' business, Whinnie,' and he wud dance in his seat for maybe twa meenuts. 'What 's ailin' ye, Peter?' a' askit. 'A red-het ploo iron on ma back,' says he, an' it gied me a grue tae hear him."

"Mercy on 's, neeburs," interrupted Hillocks, "this is no cannie."

"It 's no his briest," pursued Whinnie, "for he hesna got a hoast; an' it 's no a stroke, whatever it be, for he 's aye on the motion; an' it 's no his inside; but in or oot, Peter 's a

waesome sicht," and Whinnie's manner greatly impressed the fathers.

Leezbeth went up on Monday, as a commissioner from Drumsheugh, and that masterful woman made no doubt that she would unravel the mystery; but she was distinctly awed by Mrs. McIntosh's tone, which was a fine blend of anxiety and importance.

"Hoo are ye, Leezbeth, an' hoo 's Drumsheugh? There 's threatenin' tae be a scoorie, but it 'ill maybe haud up till the aifternoon. Wull ye come in tae the kitchen the day? The gude man 's no himsel' the noo, and he 's sittin' ben the hoose."

"That 's what a' cam' aboot," said Leezbeth, rebelling against the solemnity of the atmosphere; "we heard doon bye that he wes sober (ill), an' the maister 's aff tae Dunleith, and cudna get up tae speir for him. What 's the natur' o' the tribble? Wes 't sudden?"

Janet knew she was mistress of the situation for once, and had no fear that Leezbeth could bring her down from her high places in this rough fashion.

"It 's rael freendly o' ye, an' a 'm muckle obleeged; the fouk are awfu' ta'en up aboot

Peter, an' there 's juist ae word on a'body's mooth. A' ken what 's comin' as sune as a' see a neebur crossin' the fields.

"Ye may be sure, Leezbeth, a' wud tell ye, gin a' kent masel'," and Janet wagged her head; "it 's nae pleesure tae me that there sud be naethin' noo at kirk or market but Peter's tribble, and tae hae half the Glen deavin' me wi' questions.

"Wumman, a' tell ye, as sure as a 'm stannin' here, a' wud raither hae Peter gaein' aboot at his wark instead o' a' this tiravee (commotion), and him girnin' frae mornin' tae nicht in his chair. Div ye hear him ragin' at Mary?"

"Gae awa oot o' there," and Peter was evidently rejecting some office of attention; "gin ye come near me a 'll tak ma stick tae yir shoothers, ye little trimmie; ma word, a 'm het eneuch withoot a plaid."

"This is a terrible hoose the noo," and Janet struggled vainly with a natural pride; "there 's been naethin' like this wi' oor forbears sae far back as a' can mind, an' a' doot gin there 's been the marra o 't in the Glen."

"Hoo 's he affeckit?" for Leezbeth was much exasperated by Janet's airs, a woman who, in

ordinary circumstances, could not have withstood her for an instant. "Ye can surely say that muckle. It 's no his chest; that 's in fine fettle; it 'ill be aither his legs or his head; maist likely his head frae the wy he 's carryin' on."

"Leezbeth, dinna mak licht o' sic a veesitation," said Janet, with all the dignity of affliction; "ye dinna ken when it micht draw nearer hame. It wes hangin' ower Peter for months, but it cam oot sudden in the end, a' in a piece ae morning. Na, the tribble 'ill tak a rin up an' doon his legs, but it disna settle there, an' a' canna deny that he 's fractious at a time, but he never rammils (wanders); whatever it be, the tribble keeps tae its ain place."

"Whar is that and what like is 't?" for Leezbeth was now reduced to entreaty; "there maun be something tae see, an', Janet wumman, a 've hed deiths amang ma fouk, tae sae naethin' o' bringin' up Drumsheugh's calves for thirty year."

"A' ken ye 're skilly, Leezbeth," said Janet, much mollified by Leezbeth's unwonted humility, "an' a 'd be gled o' yir advice. Ye daurna ask Peter for a sicht, but a 'll gie ye an idea

o 't. It 's juist for a' the warld," and Leezbeth held her breath, "like a sklatch o' eukiness (itchiness) half roond his waist, naither mair nor less."

"Is that a', Janet?" and Leezbeth began to take revenge for her humiliation; "ye needna hae made sic an ado aboot. Div ye no ken what 's the maitter wi' yir man? gin ye hed ony gumption (sense) he micht hae been weel langsyne.

"Wumman, it 's a heat in the banes 'at he 's gotten laist hairst, and the spring 's drawin' it oot. Dinna send it in for ony sake, else ye 'ill hae yir man in the kirkyaird.

"Ma advice," continued Leezbeth, now rioting in triumph, "wud be tae rub him weel wi' whisky; ye canna gang wrang wi' speerits, oot or in; an' dinna lat him sleep; if he took tae dronyin' (dozing) ye micht never get him waukened." And so Drumsheugh's housekeeper departed, having dashed Janet at a stroke.

When Kirsty arrived in the afternoon to offer her services, Janet had no heart to enter into the case.

"Drumsheugh's Leezbeth gied us a cry afore

dinner and settled the maitter; gin she lays doon the law there 's naebody need conter her; ye wud think she 'd been at the creation tae hear her speak; ye 've hed a lang traivel, Kirsty, an' ye 'ill be ready for yir tea."

"Ou ay," replied Janet bitterly, "she gied it a name; it 's naething but a bit heat—a bairn's rash, a 'm jidgin', though a' never saw ane like it a' ma days; but Leezbeth kens better, wi' a' her experience, an' of coorse it 's a sateesfaction tae ken that the Glen needna fash (trouble) themselves aboot Peter."

"Leezbeth wesna blate," Kirsty burst out, unable to contain herself at the thought of this intrusion into her recognised sphere, "an' it 's a mercy we hae the like o' her in the Glen noo that Doctor Maclure is deid an' gane. Did ye say her experience?" and Kirsty began to warm to the occasion; "a' wunner whether it 's wi' beasts or fouk? Gin it be wi' Drumsheugh's young cattle, a' hae naethin' tae say; but gin it be Christians, a' wud juist ask ae question—hoo mony o' her fouk hes she beeried?"

"Naethin' tae speak o' aside you, Kirsty," said Janet, in propitiation; "a'body kens what preevileges ye 've hed."

"Ae brither an' twa half sisters, that 's a'," continued Kirsty, "for a' hed it frae her own lips; it 's no worth mentionin'; gin a' hed seen nae mair tribble than that a' wud be ashamed tae show ma face in a sick hoose; lat 's hear aboot yir man, Janet," and Kirsty settled down to details.

"Did ye say half roond, Janet?" and she leaned forward with concern on every feature.

"That 's hoo it is; the ither side is as white as a bairn's skin; an' though he be ma man, a 'll say this for him, that he 's aye hed clean blude an' nae marks; but what are ye glowerin' at? hae ye ony licht? speak, wumman."

"This is a mair serious business, Janet, than onybody suspectit," and Kirsty sighed heavily.

"Preserve 's, Kirsty, what div ye think is the matter wi' Peter? tell 's the warst at aince," for Kirsty's face suggested an apocalypse of woe.

"A heat," she said, still lingering over Leezbeth's shallow, amateur suggestion, "gotten at the hairst . . . rub it wi' whisky . . . ay, ay, it 's plain whar she gets her skill, 'at disna ken the differ atween the tribble o' a man an' a beast.

"Isn't maist michty," and now Kirsty grew

indignant, "'at a wumman o' Leezbeth's age cudna tell an eruption frae a jidgment?"

"Kirsty Stewart, hoo div ye ken that?" cried Janet, much lifted; "a' wes jalousin' that it passed ordinary, but what gars ye think o' jidgment?"

"A 'm no the wumman tae meddle wi' sic a word lichtly. Na, na, a' micht hae gaed awa' an' said naethin' gin Leezbeth hedna been sae ready wi' her heats.

"A 'm no wantin' tae frichten ye, Janet," and Kirsty's face assumed an awful significance, "an' a 'm no wantin' tae flatter ye, but ye may lippen tae 't Peter 's hed a special dispensation. Did ye say aboot twa hands'-breadths?"

As Janet could only nod, Kirsty continued: "He 's been gruppit by a muckle hand, an' it 's left the sign. Leezbeth wes maybe no sae far wrang aboot the heat, but it came frae the ootside, a 'm dootin'."

"Div ye mean," and Janet's voice had sunk to a whisper, "is 't auld——"

"Dinna say the word, wumman; he micht be hearin', and there 's nae use temptin' him. It 's juist a warnin', ye see, an' it 's a mercy he gied

nae farther. Hed he ta'en baith hands, it micht hae been the end o' yir man."

"This is no lichtsome," and Janet began to wail, although not quite insensible to the distinction Peter had achieved; "a' kent frae the beginnin' this wesna a common tribble, an' we 're behadden tae ye for settlin' the maitter. Whatever hes Peter dune tae bring sic a jidgment on himsel? He 's a cautious man as ye 'ill get in the Glen, an' pays his rent tae the day; he may taste at a time, but he never fechts; it beats me tae pit ma hand on the meanin' o 't."

"There wes some clash (gossip) aboot him contradickin' the minister," said Kirsty, looking into the remote distance.

"Div ye mean the colie-shangie (disturbance) ower the new stove, when Peter and the doctor hed sic a cast oot? Ye 're an awfu' wumman," and Janet regarded Kirsty with admiration; "a' never wud hae thocht o' conneckin' the twa things. But a' daurna say ye 're no richt, for a' hed ma ain fears aboot the wy Peter wes cairryin' on.

"'A 'll no gie up ma pew whar oor fouk hae sat Gude kens hoo lang, for the doctor or ony

ither man; they can pit the stove on the ither side, an' gin it disna draw there, the doctor can set it up in the kirkyaird.' Thae were his verra words, Kirsty, an' a' tell 't him they wud dae him nae gude.

"If a' didna beg o' him ootside that door no tae gang against the minister. 'Dinna be the first in the Glen tae anger the doctor,' a' said; but Peter 's that thrawn when his birse is up that ye micht as weel speak tae a wall.

"He 's made a bonnie like endin' wi' his dourness; but, Kirsty, he 's sair humbled, an' a' wudna say but he micht come roond gin he wes hannelled cautious. What wud ye advise, Kirsty?"

"The doctor 's comin' hame this week, a 'm hearin', an' he 'ill be up tae see Peter afore Sabbath. Noo ma opinion is," and Kirsty spoke with great deliberation, "that ye micht juist bring roond the conversation till ye titched on the stove, an' Peter cud gie the doctor tae understand that there wud be nae mair argiment aboot his seat.

"Whinnie cud get a bottle frae the Muirtown doctor on Friday—it wud be a help—but it 's no medeecine, no, nor whisky, 'at 'ill dae the

wark. Gin ye settle with the minister, yir man 'ill be in the kirk afore the month be oot," and Kirsty was invested with such mystery that Janet hardly dared an allusion to Milton's third marriage.

Peter made his first appearance in the kirk-yard the very day the stove was installed, and received the congratulations of the fathers with an admirable modesty.

"A' wes feared he micht be lifted," Hillocks remarked, after Peter had gone in to take possession of his new seat, "an' ye cudna hae wonnered gin he hed, for he 's gaen through mair than most, but he held oot his hand for the box wi' as little pride as if it hed been rheumatiks.

"He 's fell hearty an' cheery, but Peter 's hed a shak, an' when he saw the smoke oot the stove there wes a look cam ower his face. Sall," concluded Hillocks, with emphasis, "he 'ill no meddle with the minister again, a 'll warrant."

"Wha wud hae thocht the doctor wes sae veecious, or are ye considerin' that there wes anither hand in 't, Hillocks?" inquired Jamie Soutar, with great smoothness of speech.

"Naebody said the minister did it, Jamie,

and a' never said onybody did it, but we may hae oor ain thochts, and Peter 'ill no forget this stramash (accident) as lang as he lives."

"Na, na, a minister 's an ill craw tae shoot at, Jamie," and Hillocks went into kirk as one who had rebuked a mocking scepticism; but Jamie stood alone under the beech-tree till they had raised the psalm, and then he followed his neighbors, with a face of funereal solemnity.

DRUMSHEUGH'S LOVE STORY

I

DRUMSHEUGH'S FIRESIDE

DRUMSHEUGH had arrested Dr. Maclure on the high road the winter before he died, and compelled him to shelter for a while, since it was a rough December night not far from Christmas, and every one knew the doctor had begun to fail.

"Is that you, Weelum?" for the moon was not yet up, and an east wind was driving the snow in clouds; "a' wes oot seein' the sheep werena smoored in the drift, an' a 'm wrastlin' hame.

"Come back tae the hoose an' rest; gin there 's tae be ony mune she 'ill be oot by nine, and the wind 'ill maybe settle; ye 're baith o' ye sair forfoochen" (exhausted), and Drumsheugh seized Jess's bridle.

For eight miles the wind had been on Maclure's back, and he was cased in snow from the

crown of the felt hat, that was bent to meet his jacket collar, down to the line of his saddle. The snow made a little bank on the edge of the saddle that was hardly kept in check by the heat of Jess's body; it was broken into patches on his legs by the motion of riding, but clung in hard lumps to the stirrup irons. The fine drift whirling round powdered him in front, and melting under his breath, was again frozen into icicles on his beard, and had made Jess's mane still whiter. When Drumsheugh's housekeeper opened the kitchen door and the light fell on the horse and her master—a very ghostly sight—Leezabeth was only able to say, "Preserve 's a' body and soul," which was the full form of a prayer in use on all occasions of surprise.

Three times the doctor essayed to come down, and could not for stiffness, and he would have fallen on the doorstep had it not been for Drumsheugh.

"This 'ill be a lesson tae ye, Weelum," helping him in to the kitchen; "ye 're doonricht numbed; get aff the doctor's boots, Leezabeth, an' bring a coat for him."

"Awa wi' ye; div ye think a 'm a bairn?

. . . A 'll be masel in a meenut . . . it wes the cauld . . . they 're stiff tae pull, Leezabeth . . . let me dae 't . . . weel, weel, if ye wull . . . but a' dinna like tae see a wumman servin' a man like this."

He gave in after a slight show of resistance, and Leezabeth, looking up, saw her master watching Maclure wistfully, as one regards a man smitten unto death. Drumsheugh realised in one moment that this was the doctor's last winter; he had never seen him so easily managed all his life.

Leezabeth had kept house for Drumsheugh for many years, and was understood to know him in all his ways. It used to be a point of interesting debate which was the harder, but all agreed that they led the Glen in ingenious economy and unfailing detection of irresponsible generosity. The Kildrummie butcher in his irregular visits to the Glen got no support at Drumsheugh, and the new lass that favoured the ploughmen with flowing measure was superseded next milking time.

"That 's yir pint, Jeems, naither mair nor less," Leezabeth would say to the "second man." "Mary's hand shaks when there 's lads

aboot," and Drumsheugh heard the story with much appreciation in the evening.

She used to boast that there was "nae saft bit aboot the maister," and of all things Drumsheugh was supposed to be above sentiment. But Leezabeth was amazed that evening at a curious gentleness of manner that softened his very voice as he hung round the doctor.

"Drink it aff, Weelum," holding the glass to his lips; "it 'ill start the hert again; try an' rise, an' we 'ill gang ben the hoose noo . . . that 's it, ye 're on yir legs again . . . that door 's aye in the road . . . it 's a dark passage; gie 's yir airm . . . it 's awfu' hoo stiff a body gets sittin'."

Leezabeth was ordered to bring such dainties as could be found, and she heard Drumsheugh pressing things upon the doctor with solicitude.

"It 's no richt tae gang that lang withoot meat, an' the nicht 's sae cauld; ye 'ill be fund on the road some mornin'. Try some o' thae black currants; they 're graund for a hoast. Ye 're no surely dune already.

"Draw in yir chair tae the fire, Weelum; tak this ane; it wes ma mither's, an' it 's easier; ye need it aifter that ride. Are ye warm noo?"

"A 'm rael comfortable an' content, Drumsheugh; it 's a wee lonesome wast yonder when a man comes in weet an' tired o' a nicht; juist tae sit aside a freend, although nane o 's say mickle, is a rest."

"A' wush ye wud come aftener, Weelum," said Drumsheugh hastily; "we 're no as young as we were, an' we micht draw thegither mair. It 's no speakin' maks freends. . . . Hoo auld are ye noo?"

"Seeventy-three this month, an' a 'll no see anither birthday; ye 're aulder, Drum"—Maclure only was so privileged—"but ye 're a hale man an' gude for twal year yet."

"Ye micht hae been the same yersel if ye hadna been a senseless fule an' sae thrawn (obstinate) ye wudna be guided by onybody; but if ye gang cautious ye 'ill live us a' oot yet; ye 're no like the same man noo 'at cam in tae the kitchen. Leezabeth wes fleggit at the sicht o' ye," and Drumsheugh affected mirth.

"Wes she, though?" said Maclure, with some relish. "A 've often thocht it wud tak a chairge o' gunpooder tae pit Leezabeth aff her jundy (ordinary course). Hoo lang hes she been wi' ye? A' mind her comin'; it wes

aifter yir mither deed; that 's a gude while past noo."

"Five and thirty year last Martinmas; she 's a Kildrummie wumman, but a' her fouk are dead. Leezabeth 's been a faithfu' housekeeper, an' she 's an able wumman; a' ve naething tae say against Leezabeth.

"She 's a graund manager," continued Drumsheugh meditatively, "an' there 's no been mickle lost here since she cam; a 'll say that for her; she dis her wark accordin' tae her licht, but it 's aye scrapin' wi' her, and the best o' hoosekeepers maks a cauld hame.

"Weelum—" and then he stopped, and roused the fire into a blaze.

"Ay, ay," said Maclure, and he looked kindly at his friend, whose face was averted.

"Wes ye gaein' tae say onything?" and Maclure waited, for a great confidence was rare in Drumtochty.

"There wes something happened in ma life lang syne nae man kens, an' a' want tae tell ye, but no the nicht, for ye 're tired an' cast doon. Ye 'ill come in sune again, Weelum."

"The mornin's nicht, gin it be possible," and then both men were silent for a space.

The wind came in gusts, roaring in the chimney, and dying away with a long moan across the fields, while the snow-drift beat against the window. Drumsheugh's dog, worn out with following his master through the drifts, lay stretched before the fire sound asleep, but moved an ear at the rattling of a door upstairs, or a sudden spark from the grate.

Drumsheugh gazed long into the red caverns and saw former things, till at last he smiled and spake.

"Hoo lang is't since ye guddled for troot, Weelum?"

"Saxty year or sae; div ye mind yon hole in the Sheuchie burn, whar it comes doon frae the muir? They used to lie and feed in the rin o' the water.

"A' wes passin' that wy lairst hairst, an' a' took a thocht and gied ower tae the bank. The oak looks juist the same, an' a' keekit through, an' if there wesna a troot ablow the big stane. If a' hedna been sae stiff a' wud hae gien doon and tried ma luck again."

"A' ken the hole fine, Weelum," burst out Drumsheugh; "div ye mind where a' catchit yon twa-punder in the dry simmer? it wes the

biggest ever taen oot o' the Sheuchie; a' telt ye a' next day at schule."

"Ye did that, an' ye blew aboot that troot for the hale winter, but nane o' us ever saw 't, an' it wes juist a bare half pund tae begin wi'; it 's been growin', a' doot; it 'ill be five afore ye 're dune wi 't, Drum."

"Nane o' yir impidence, Weelum. A' weighed it in Luckie Simpson's shop as a' gied hame, an' it made twa pund as sure as a 'm sitting here; but there micht be a wecht left in the scale wi 't."

"Fishers are the biggest leears a' ever cam across, and ye 've dune yir best the nicht, Drum; but eh, man, guddlin' wes a graund ploy," and the doctor got excited.

"A' think a 'm at it aince mair, wi' ma sleeves up tae the oxters, lying on ma face, wi' naethin' but the een ower the edge o' the stane, an' slippin' ma hands intae the caller water, an' the rush o' the troot, and grippin' the soople slidderin' body o 't an' throwin 't ower yir head, wi' the red spots glistening on its white belly; it wes michty."

"Ay, Weelum, an' even missin 't wes worth while; tae feel it shoot atween yir hands an'

see it dash doon the burn, makin' a white track in the shallow water, an' ower a bit fall and oot o' sicht again in anither hole."

They rested for a minute to revel in the past, and in the fire the two boys saw water running over gravel, and deep, cool holes beneath overhanging rocks, and little waterfalls, and birch boughs dipping into the pools, and speckled trout gleaming on the grass.

Maclure's face kindled into mirth, and he turned in his chair.

"Ye 're sayin' naethin' o' the day when the burn wes settlin' aifter a spate, and ye cam tae me an' Sandy Baxter an' Netherton's brither 'Squinty,' an' temptit us tae play the truant, threepin' ye hed seen the troot juist swarmin' in the holes."

"A' tried John Baxter tae," interrupted Drumsheugh, anxious for accuracy since they had begun the story, "though he didna come. But he wudna tell on 's for a' that. Hillocks lat it oot at the sight o' the tawse. 'They 're up the Sheuchie aifter the troot,' he roared, an' the verra lassies cried 'clype' (tell tale) at him gaein' hame."

"What a day it wes, Drum; a' can see

Sandie's heels in the air when he coupit intae the black hole abune Gormack, an' you pullin' him oot by the seat o' his breeks, an' his Latin Reader, 'at hed fa'en oot o' his pocket, sailin' doon the water, an' 'Squinty' aifter it, scrammellin' ower the stanes;" and the doctor laughed aloud.

"Ye 've forgot hoo ye sent me in tae beg for a piece frae the gude wife at Gormack, an' she saw the lave o' ye coorin' ahint the dyke, an' gied us a flytin' for playin' truant."

"Fient a bit o 't," and Maclure took up the running again; "an' then she got a sicht o' Sandie like a drooned rat, and made him come in tae dry himsel, and gied us pork an' oat cake. My plate hed a burn on it like the Sheuchie—a' cud draw the pattern on a sheet o' paper till this day—that wes Gormack's mither's; it 's no sae lang since she deed; a' wes wi' her the laist nicht."

"An' the tawse next day frae the auld Dominie, him 'at wes afore Domsie; he hed a fine swing. A' think a' feel the nip still," and Drumsheugh shuffled in his chair; "an' then we got anither lickin' frae oor faithers; but, man," slapping his knee, "it wes worth

it a'; we 've never hed as gude a day again."

"It 's juist like yesterday, Drum, but it cam tae an end; and div ye mind hoo we were feared tae gae hame, and didna start till the sun wes weel doon ahint Ben Urtach?

"Four o 's," resumed Maclure; "an' Sandie got a Russian bayonet through his breist fechtin' ae snawy nicht in the trenches, an' puir Squinty deed oot in Ameriky wearyin' for the Glen an' wishin' he cud be buried in Drumtochty kirkyaird. Fine laddies baith, an' that 's twa o' the fower truants that hae gane hame.

"You an' me, Drum, hed the farthest road tae traivel that nicht, an' we 're the laist again; the sun 's settin' for us tae; we 've hed a gude lang day, and ye 'ill hae a whilie aifter me, but we maun follow the ither twa."

"Ye 're richt, Weelum, aboot the end o 't, whichever gangs first," said Drumsheugh.

Another silence fell on the two men, and both looked steadfastly into the fire, till the dog rose and laid his head on Drumsheugh's hand. He was also getting old, and now had no other desire than to be with his master.

Drumsheugh moved his chair into the shadow, and sighed.

"It 's no the same though, Weelum, it 's no the same ava. . . . We did what we sudna, an' wes feared tae meet oor faithers, nae doot, but we kent it wud be waur oot on the cauld hill, an' there wes a house tae shelter 's at ony rate."

"Maclure would not help, and Drumsheugh went on again as if every word were drawn from him in agony.

"We dinna ken onything aboot . . .—and he hesitated—"aboot . . . the ither side. A 've thocht o 't often in the gloamin' o' a simmer nicht, or sittin' here alane by the fire in winter time; a man may seem naething but an auld miserly fairmer, an' yet he may hae his ain thochts.

"When a' wes a laddie, the doctor's father wes in the poopit, an' Dominie Cameron wes in the schule, an' yir father rode up an' doon the Glen, an' they 're a' gane. A' can see at a time in kirk the face that used tae be at the end of ilka seat, an' the bairns in the middle, an' the gude wife at the top: there 's no ane a' canna bring up when the doctor 's at the sermon.

"Wae 's me, the auld fouk that were in Burnbrae, an' Hillocks, an' Whinny Knowe are a' dead and buried, ma ain father an' mother wi' the lave, an' their bairns are makin' ready tae follow them, an' sune the 'ill be anither generation in oor places."

He paused, but Maclure knew he had not finished.

"That 's no the warst o 't, for naebody wants tae live ower lang, till he be cripple an' dottle (crazy.) A' wud raither gang as sune as a' cudna manage masel, but . . . we hev nae word o' them. They 've said gude-bye, and gane oot o' the Glen, an' fouk say they 're in the land o' the leal. It 's a bonny song, an' a' dinna like onybody tae see me when it 's sung, but . . . wha kens for certain . . . aboot that land?"

Still Maclure made no sign.

"The sun 'ill come up frae Strathmore, and set abune Glen Urtach, an' the Tochty 'ill rin as it dis this nicht, an' the 'ill be fouk sowin' the seed in spring and githerin' in the corn in hairst, an' a congregation in the kirk, but we 'ill be awa an' . . . Weelum, wull that be . . . the end o' us?" And there was such a tone in

Drumsheugh's voice that the dog whined and licked his hand.

"No, Drumsheugh, it 'ill no be the end," said the doctor in a low, quiet voice, that hardly sounded like his own. "A 've often thocht it 's mair like the beginnin'. Oor forbears are oot o' sicht, an' a' wudna want tae hae them back, but nae man 'ill ever gar me believe the kirkyaird hauds Drumtochty.

"Na, na, a 've watched the Glen for mony a year, an' the maist hertsome sicht a' hae seen is the makin' o' men an' weemen. They 're juist thochtless bairns tae begin wi', as we were oorsels, but they 're no dune wi' schule aifter they leave Domsie.

"Wark comes first, and fechtin' awa wi' oor cauld land and wringin' eneuch oot o 't tae pay for rent and livin' pits smeddum (spirit) into a man. Syne comes luve tae maist o 's, an' teaches some selfish, shallow cratur tae play the man for a wumman's sake; an' laist comes sorrow, that gars the loudest o 's tae haud his peace.

"It 's a lang schulin', but it hes dune its wark weel in Drumtochty. A 'm no sayin' oor fouk are clever or that they haena fauts, but

a 'm prood to hev been born and lived ma days in the Glen. A' dinna believe there 's a leear amang us—except maybe Milton, an' he cam frae Muirtown—nor a cooard wha wudna mak his hand keep his head; nor a wastrel, when Charlie Grant 's in Ameriky; nor a hard-herted wratch 'at wudna help his neebur.

"It 's a rouch schule the Glen, an' sae wes puir Domsie's; but, sall, he sent oot lads 'at did us credit in the warld, an' a 'm judgin', Drumsheugh, that the scholars that gied oot o' the Glen the ither road 'ill hae their chance tae, an' pit naebody tae shame. Ye ken a' hevna hed muckle time for releegion, but a body gies a thocht tae the ither warld at a time, an' that 's ma ain mind."

"Ye 're maybe no far wrang, Weelum; it soonds wise like, but . . . ye canna be sure."

"A 've seen fouk 'at were sure," said the doctor, "an' a 'm thankfu' that a' kent auld Burnbrae. He wes a strict man, an' mony a lecture he gied me aboot gaein' tae kirk an' usin' better langidge, but a' tell ye, he wes the richt sort; nae peetifu' chaff o' heepocrisy aboot him.

"A' wes wi' him at his deith. . . ."

"Did ye see onything?" Drumsheugh leaned forward and spoke in a whisper.

"A' saw naething but a gude man gaein' oot on his lang journey, an' a' want tae see nae graunder sicht.

"He wesna conscious, an' his wife, puir wumman, wes murnin' that she wudna get a last look, an' John, him 'at 's Burnbrae noo, wes distressed for his mither 's sake.

"'Say the name,' for a' wes holdin' his head, 'an' he 'ill hear;' but a' cudna; it wesna for my tongue.

"So he said it into his father's ear, an' Burnbrae opened his eyes, and githered them a' in a smile, an' a' heard twa words.

"'No evil.' He wes past sayin' fear. . . . Drumsheugh, a' wud . . . tak ma chance the nicht wi' auld Burnbrae."

"Ma mither didna ken us for the laist twa days," and Drumsheugh rested his head on his hands.

"Ye mind the bit lassiky"—Maclure would tell all when he was at it—"that lived wi' Mary Robertson and Jamie Soutar made sic a wark aboot, for her mither wes dead; she wes chokin' wi' her tribble, an' a' took her

on ma knee, for Daisy and me were aye chief.

"'Am a' gaein' tae dee the day?' she said, an' a' cud not tell a lee lookin' intae yon een.

"'Ye're no feared, dautie,' a' said; 'ye 'ill sune be hame.'

"'Haud me ticht, then, Docksie'—that wes her name for me—'an' mither 'ill tak me oot o' yir airms.' . . . The Almichty wud see the wee lassie wesna pit tae shame, or else . . . that 's no His name.

"The wind 's doon," and the doctor hurried over to the window, "an' the mune is shinin' clear an' sweet; a 'll need tae be aff, an' a 'll hae the licht instead o' the drift aifter a', Drumsheugh."

Nothing passed between them till they came to the main road, and the doctor said good-night.

Then Drumsheugh stood close in to the saddle, and adjusted a stirrup leather.

"You an' me are no like Burnbrae and the bairnie, Weelum; a 'm feared at times aboot . . . the home comin'."

"A' dinna wunner, Drumsheugh, a 'm often the same masel; we 're baith truant laddies,

and maybe we 'ill get oor paiks, an' it 'ill dae us gude. But be that as it may, we maun juist risk it, an' a 'm houpin' the Almichty 'ill no be waur tae us than oor mither when the sun gaes doon and the nicht wind sweeps ower the hill."

II

DRUMSHEUGH'S SECRET

WHEN Leezabeth brought word that Dr. Maclure had ridden into the "close," Drumsheugh knew for what end he had come, but it was characteristic of Drumtochty that after they had exhausted local affairs, he should be stricken dumb and stare into the fire with averted face. For a space the doctor sat silent, because we respected one another's souls in the Glen, and understood the agony of serious speech, but at last he judged it right to give assistance.

"Ye said laist nicht that ye hed something tae say."

"A 'm comin' tae 't; juist gie me twa meenuts mair." But it was ten before Drumsheugh opened his mouth, although he arranged himself in his chair and made as though he would speak three times.

"Weelum," he said at last, and then he stopped, for his courage had failed.

"A 'm hearin', Drum; tak yir ain time; the fire 's needin' mendin'," and the light, blazing up suddenly, showed another Drumsheugh than was known on Muirtown market.

"It 's no easy, Weelum, tae say onything that gangs deeper than the weather an' cattle beasts." Drumsheugh passed his hand across his forehead, and Maclure's pity was stirred.

"Gin ye hae dune onything wrang, an' ye want tae relieve yir mind, ye may lippen tae me, Drumsheugh, though it titch yir life. A' can haud ma tongue, an' a 'm a leal man.

"A' thocht it wesna that," as Drumsheugh shook his head; "a 'm jidgin' that ye hae a sorrow the Glen disna ken, and wud like an auld freend tae feel the wecht o 't wi' ye."

Drumsheugh looked as if that was nearer the mark, but still he was silent.

"A' ken what ye 're feelin' for a' cudna speak masel," and then he added, at the sight of his friend's face, "Dinna gar yirsel speak against yir wull. We 'ill say naethin' mair aboot it. . . . Did ye hear o' Hillocks coupin' intae the drift till there wes naethin' seen but

his heels, and Gormack sayin', 'Whar are ye aff tae noo, Hillocks?'"

"A' maun speak," burst out Drumsheugh; "a 've carried ma tribble for mair than thirty year, and cud hae borne it till the end, but ae thing a' canna stand, an' that is, that aither you or me dee afore a 've cleared ma name."

"Yir name?" and the doctor regarded Drumsheugh with amazement.

"Ay, ma character; a 've naethin' else, Weelum, naither wife nor bairns, so a 'm jealous o 't, though fouk michtna think it.

"Noo, gin onybody in Muirtown askit ma certeeficat o' a Drumtochty neebur, gie me his answer," and Drumsheugh turned suddenly on Maclure, who was much confused.

"Nae Drumtochty man wud say ony ill o' ye; he daurna, for ye 've gien him nae occasion, an' ye surely ken that yirsel withoot askin'." But Drumsheugh was still waiting.

"He micht say that ye were juist a wee," and then he broke off, "but what need ye care for the havers of a market? fouk 'ill hae their joke."

"Ye said a wee; what is 't, Weelum?" and the doctor saw there was to be no escape.

"Weel, they micht maybe sayin' behind yir back, Drum, what some o' them wud say tae yir face, meanin' nae evil, ye ken, that ye were . . . carefu', in fact, an' . . . keen aboot the bawbees. Naethin' mair nor worse than that, as a 'm sittin' here."

"Naethin' mair, said ye?" Drumsheugh spoke with much bitterness—"an' is yon little? 'Carefu';' ye 're a gude-hearted man, Weelum; miser 's nearer it, a 'm dootin', a wratch that 'ill hae the laist penny in a bargain, and no spend a saxpence gin he can keep it."

Maclure saw it was not a time to speak.

"They 've hed mony a lauch in the train ower ma tigs wi' the dealers, an' some o' them wud hae like tae hev cam aff as weel—a cratur like Milton; but what dis Burnbrae, 'at coonted his verra livin' less than his principles, or auld Domsie, that 's dead an' gane noo, 'at wud hae spent his laist shillin' sendin' a laddie tae the College—he gied it tae me aince het, like the man he wes—or the minister, wha wud dee raither than condescend tae a meanness, or what can . . . Marget Hoo think o' me?" and the wail in Drumsheugh's voice went to the heart of Maclure.

"Dinna tak on like this, Drum; it 's waesome tae hear ye, an' it 's clean havers ye 're speakin' the nicht. Didna Domsie get mony a note frae ye for his college laddies?—a 've heard him on 't—an' it wes you 'at paid Geordie Hoo's fees, an' wha wes 't brocht Sir George an' savit Annie Mitchell's life ——?"

"That didna cost me muckle in the end, sin' it wes your daein' an' no mine; an' as for the bit fees for the puir scholars, they were naethin' ava.

"Na, na, Weelum, it 'ill no dae. A' ken the hert o' ye weel, and ye 'ill stan' by yir freend through fair and foul; but a 'm gaein' tae clear things up aince for a'; a 'll never gang through this again.

"It 's no the Glen a 'm thinkin' aboot the nicht; a' wud like tae hae their gude opinion, an' a 'm no what they 're considerin' me, but a' canna gie them the facts o' the case, an' . . . a' maun juist dee as a' hev lived.

"What cuts me tae the hert is that the twa fouk a' luve sud hae reason to jidge me a miser; ane o' them wull never ken her mistake, but a 'll pit masel richt wi' the ither. Weelum, for what div ye think a 've been scrapin' for a' thae years?"

"Weel, gin ye wull hae ma mind," said the doctor slowly, "a' believed ye hed been crossed in luve, for ye telt me as much yersel. . . ."

"Ye 're richt, Weelum; a 'll tell ye mair the nicht; gang on."

"It cam tae ma mind that ye turned tae bargainin' an' savin', no for greed—a' kent there wes nae greed in ye; div ye suppose a' cudna tell the differ atween ma freend an' Milton?—but for a troke tae keep yir mind aff . . . aff yir sorrow."

"Thank ye, Weelum, thank ye kindly, but it wesna even on accoont o' that a 've lived barer than ony plooman for the best part o' ma life; a' tell ye, beyond the stockin' on ma fairm a 'm no worth twa hunder pund this nicht.

"It wes for anither a' githered, an' as fast as I got the gear a' gied it awa," and Drumsheugh sprang to his feet, his eyes shining; "it wes for luve's sake a' haggled an' schemed an' stairved an' toiled till a 've been a byword at kirk and market for nearness; a' did it a' an' bore it a' for ma luve, an' for . . . ma luve a' wud hae dune ten times mair.

"Did ye ken wha it wes, Weelum?"

"Ye never mentioned her name, but a'

jaloosed, an' there 's nane like her in the Glen——"

"No, nor in braid Scotland for me! She 'ill aye be the bonniest as weel as the noblest o' weemen in ma een till they be stickit in deith. But ye never saw Marget in her bloom, when the blossom wes on the tree, for a' mind ye were awa in Edinburgh thae years, learning yir business.

"A' left the schule afore she cam, an' the first time a' ever kent Marget richt wes the day she settled wi' her mither in the cottar's hoose on Drumsheugh, an' she 's hed ma hert sin' that 'oor.

"It wesna her winsome face nor her gentle ways that drew me, Weelum; it wes . . . her soul, the gudeness 'at lookit oot on the warld through yon grey een, sae serious, thochtfu', kindly.

"Nae man cud say a rouch word or hae a ill thocht in her presence; she made ye better juist tae hear her speak an' stan' aside her at the wark.

"A' hardly ever spoke tae her for the three year she wes wi 's, an' a' said na word o' luve. A' houpit some day tae win her, an' a' wes mair

than content tae hae her near me. Thae years were bitter tae me aifterwards, but, man, a' wudna be withoot them noo; they 're a' the time a' ever hed wi' Marget.

"A 'm a-wearyin' ye, Weelum, wi' what can be little mair than havers tae anither man." But at the look on the doctor's face, he added, "A 'll tell ye a' then, an' . . . a 'll never mention her name again. Ye 're the only man ever heard me say 'Marget' like this.

"Weelum, a' wes a man thae days, an' thochts cam tae me 'at gared the hert leap in ma breist, and ma blude rin like the Tochty in spate. When a' drave the scythe through the corn in hairst, and Marget lifted the gowden swathe ahint me, a' said, 'This is hoo a 'll toil an' fecht for her a' the days o' oor life;' an' when she gied me the sheaves at the mill for the threshin', 'This is hoo she 'ill bring a' guid things tae ma hame.'

"Aince her hand touched mine—a' see a withered forget-me-not among the aits this meenut—an' . . . that wes the only time a' ever hed her hand in mine . . . a' hoddit the floor, an', Weelum, a' hev it tae this day.

"There 's a stile on the road tae the hill, an'

a hawthorn-tree at the side o't; it wes there she met ae sweet simmer evenin', when the corn wes turnin' yellow, an' telt me they wud be leavin' their hoose at Martinmas. Her face hed a licht on it a' hed never seen. 'A'm tae be marriet,' she said, 'tae William Howe. . . .'"

"Puir lad, puir lad, aifter a' yir houps; did ye lat her ken?"

"Na, na; it wes ower late, an' wud only hae vexed her. Howe and her hed been bairns thegither, an' a've heard he wes kind tae her father when he wes sober (weakly), an' so . . . he got her hert. A' cudna hae changed her, but a' micht hae made her meeserable.

"A' leaned ower that stile for twa lang oors. Mony a time a've been there sin' then, by nicht and day. Hoo the Glen wud lauch, for a'm no the man they see. A' saw the sun gae doon that nicht, an' a' felt the darkness fa' on me, an' a' kent the licht hed gane oot o' ma life for ever."

"Ye carried yersel like a man, though," and the doctor's voice was full of pride, "but ye've hed a sair battle, Drum, an' nae man tae say weel dune."

"Dinna speak that wy, Weelum, for a 'm no say gude as ye 're thinkin'; frae that oor tae Geordie's illness a' never spak ae word o' kindness tae Marget, an' gin hatred wud hae killed him, she wud hae lost her bridegroom.

"Gude forgie me," and the drops stood on Drumsheugh's forehead. "When Hoo cudna pay, and he wes tae be turned oot of Whinnie Knowe, a' lauched tae masel, though there isna a kinder, simpler heart in the Glen than puir Whinnie's. There maun be some truth in thae auld stories aboot a deevil; he hed an awfu' grup o' me the end o' that year.

"But a' never hatit her; a' think a 've luvit her mair every year; and when a' thocht o' her trachlin' in some bit hoosie as a plooman's wife, wha wes fit for a castle, ma hert wes melted.

"Gin she hed gien me her luve, wha never knew a' wantit it, a' wud hae spilt ma blude afore ye felt care, an' though ye sees me naethin' but a cankered, contrackit, auld carle this day, a' wud hae made her happy ainee, Weelum. A' wes different when a' wes young," and Drumsheugh appealed to his friend.

"Dinna misca' yersel tae me, Drum; it 's nae use," said the doctor, with a shaky voice.

"Weel, it wesna tae be," resumed Drumsheugh after a little; "a' cudna be her man, but it seemed tae me ae day that a' micht work for Marget a' the same, an' naebody wud ken. So a' gied intae Muirtown an' got a writer——"

The doctor sprang to his feet in such excitement as was hardly known in Drumtochty.

"What a fule ye 've made o' the Glen, Drumsheugh, and what a heepocrite ye 've been. It wes you then that sent hame the money frae Ameriky 'at cleared Whinnie's feet and set Marget and him up bien (plentiful) like on their merrid," and then Maclure could do the rest for himself without assistance.

"It wud be you tae 'at started Whinnie again aifter the Pleuro took his cattle, for he wes aye an unlucky wratch, an' if it wesna you that deed oot in New York and savit him five years ago, when the stupid body pit his name tae Piggie's bill. It 's you 'at wes Whinnie's far-awa' cousin, wha hed gotten rich and sent hame help through the lawyer, an' naebody suspeckit onything.

"Drumsheugh''—and the doctor, who had been finding the room too small for him, came to a halt opposite his friend—"ye 're the maist

accomplished leear 'at 's ever been born in Drumtochty, an' . . . the best man a' ever saw. Eh, Drum," and Maclure's voice sank, "hoo little we kent ye. It 's an awfu' peety Domsie didna hear o' this afore he slippit awa'; a' can see him straichtenin' himsel at the story. Jamie Soutar 'ill be michty when he gets a haud o 't. . . ."

Twice Drumsheugh had tried to interrupt Maclure and failed, but now he brought his hand down upon the table.

"Wud ye daur, Weèlum, tae mention ae word a' hae telt ye ootside this room? gin a' thocht he wes the man——" And Drumsheugh's face was blazing.

"Quiet, man, quiet! Ye ken a' wudna withoot yir wull; but juist ae man, Jamie Soutar. Ye 'ill lat me share 't wi' Jamie."

"No even Jamie; an' a 'm ashamed tae hae telt yersel, for it looks like boastin'; an' aifter a' it wes a bit o' comfort tae me in ma cauldrife life.

"It 's been a gey lang trial, Weelum; ye canna think what it wes tae see her sittin' in the kirk ilka Sabbath wi' her man, tae follow her face in the Psalms, tae catch her een in the

Saicrament, an' tae ken that a' never wud say 'Marget' tae her in luve.

"For thirty year an' mair a 've studied her, an' seen her broon hair that wes like gowd in the sunlight turn grey, and care score lines on her face, but every year she 's comelier in ma een.

"Whinnie telt us his tribble aboot the bill in the kirkyard, an' a' saw the marks o 't in her look. There wes a tear ran doon her cheek in the prayer, an' a' . . . cud hae grat wi' her, an' then ma hert loupit wi' joy, for a' thocht there 'll be nae tear next Sabbath.

"Whinnie got the siller frae his . . . cousin, ye ken, through the week, an' settled his debt on Friday. A' met him on the street, an' made him buy a silk goon for Marget: . . . a' gied wi' him tae choose it, for he 's little jidgment, Whinnie."

"A' wes in the train that day masel," broke in the doctor, "an' a' mind Hillocks daffin' wi' ye that nae wumman cud get a goon oot o' you. Sic fules an' waur."

"A' didna mind that, no ae straw, Weelum, for Marget wes ten year younger next Sabbath, an' she wore ma goon on the Saicrament. A'

kent what bocht it, an' that was eneuch for me.

"It didna maitter what the Glen said, but ae thing gied tae ma hert, an' thet wes Marget's thocht o' me . . . but a' daurna clear masel.

"We were stannin' thegither ae Sabbath"—Drumsheugh spoke as one giving a painful memory, on which he had often brooded—"an' gaein' ower the market, an' Hillocks says, 'A' dinna ken the man or wumman 'at 'ill get a bawbee oot o' you, Drumsheugh. Ye 're the hardest lad in ten parishes.'

"Marget passed that meenut tae the kirk, an' . . . a' saw her look. Na, it wesna scorn, nor peety; it wes sorrow. . . . This wes a bien hoose in the auld day when she wes on the fairm, an' she wes wae tae see sic a change in me. A' hed tae borrow the money through the lawyer, ye ken, an' it wes a fecht payin' it wi' interest. Aye, but it wes a pleesure tae, a' that a 'll ever hev, Weelum. . . ."

"Did ye never want tae . . . tell her?" and the doctor looked curiously at Drumsheugh.

"Juist aince, Weelum, in her gairden, an' the day Geordie deed. Marget thankit me for the college fees and bit expenses a' hed paid. 'A

father cudna hae been kinder tae ma laddie,' she said, an' she laid her hand on ma airm. 'Ye 're a gude man, a' see it clear this day, an' . . . ma hert is . . . warm tae ye.' A' ran oot o' the gairden. A' micht hae broken doon. Oh, gin Geordie hed been ma ain laddie an' Marget . . . ma wife.''

Maclure waited a little, and then he quietly left, but first he laid his hand on his friend's shoulder to show that he understood.

After he had gone, Drumsheugh opened his desk and took out a withered flower. He pressed it twice to his lips, and each time he said Marget with a sob that rent his heart. It was the forget-me-not.

III

DRUMSHEUGH'S REWARD

PEOPLE tell us that if you commit a secret to a dweller in the city, and exact pledges of faithfulness, the confidence will be proclaimed on the housetops within twenty-four hours, and yet, that no charge of treachery can be brought against your friend. He has simply succumbed to the conflict between the habit of free trade in speech and the sudden embargo on one article. Secret was engraved on his face and oozed from the skirts of his garments, so that every conversational detective saw at a glance that the man was carrying treasure, and seized it at his will.

When one told a secret thing to his neighbour in Drumtochty, it did not make a ripple on the hearer's face, and it disappeared as into a deep well. "Ay, ay" was absolutely necessary as an assurance of attention, and the

farthest expression of surprise did not go beyond, "That wesna chancy." Whether a Drumtochty man ever turned over secrets in the recesses of his mind, no one can tell, but when Jamie Soutar, after an hour's silence, one evening withdrew his pipe and said "Sall" with marked emphasis, it occurred to me that he may have been digesting an event. Perhaps the law of silence was never broken except once, but that was on a royal scale, when William Maclure indirectly let out the romance of Drumsheugh's love to Marget Howe, and afterwards was forgiven by his friend.

Marget had come to visit the doctor about a month before he died, bearing gifts, and after a while their conversation turned to George.

"Dinna speak aboot ma traivellin' tae see ye," Marget said; "there 's no a body in the Glen but is behaddit tae ye, an' a' can never forget what ye did for ma laddie yon lang summer-time."

"A' did naethin', an' nae man can dae muckle in that waesome tribble. It aye taks the cleverest laddies an' the bonniest lassies; but a' never hed a heavier hert than when a' saw

Geordie's face that aifternoon. There 's ane fechtin' decline."

"Ye mak ower little o' yir help, doctor; it wes you 'at savit him frae pain an' keepit his mind clear. Withoot you he cudna workit on tae the end or seen his freends. A' the Glen cam up tae speir for him, and say a cheery word tae their scholar.

"Did a' ever tell ye that Posty wud gang roond a gude half mile oot o' his road gin he hed a letter for Geordie juist tae pit it in his hands himsel? and Posty 's a better man sin then; but wha div ye think wes kindest aifter Domsie an' yersel?"

"Wha wes 't?" but Maclure lifted his head, as if he had already heard the name.

"Ay, ye 're richt," answering the look of his friend, "Drumsheugh it wes, an' a' that simmer he wes sae gentle and thochtfu' the Glen wudna hae kent him in oor gairden.

"Ye 've seen him there yersel, but wud ye believe 't, he cam three times a week, and never empty-handed. Ae day it wud be some tasty bit frae Muirtown tae gar Geordie eat, another it wud be a buke the laddie had wantit tae buy at College, an' a month afore Geordie

left us, if Drumsheugh didna come up ae Saiturday wi' a parcel he had gotten a' the way frae London.

"'Whatna place is this, Geordie?' an' he taks aff the cover an' holds up the picture. It wud hae dune ye gude tae hae seen the licht in the laddie's een. 'Athens,' he cried, an' then he reached oot his white hand tae Drumsheugh, but naethin' wes said.

"They were at it the hale forenoon, Geordie showin' the Temple the Greeks set up tae Wisdom, an' the theatre in the shadow of the hill whar the Greek prophets preached their sermons; an' as a' gied oot an' in, Geordie wud read a bonnie bit, and Domsie himsel cudna hae been mair interested than Drumsheugh. The deein' scholar an' the auld fairmer. . . ."

"Ay, ay," said Maclure.

"Ae story Geordie telt me never ran dry wi' Drumsheugh, an' he aye askit tae hear it as a treat till the laddie grew ower sober—aboot twa lovers in the auld days, that were divided by an airm o' the sea, whar the water ran in a constant spate, and the lad hed tae sweem across tae see his lass. She held a licht on high tae guide him, an' at the sicht o't he

cared naethin' for the danger; but ae nicht the cauld, peetiless water gied ower his head, and her torch burned oot. Puir faithfu' lass, she flung hersel into the black flood, and deith jined them where there 's nae partin'."

"He likit that, did he?" said Maclure, with a tone in his voice, and looking at Marget curiously.

"Best o' a' the ancient things George gied him in the gairden, an' ae day he nearly grat, but it wesna for their deith.

"'Na, na,' he said tae George, 'a' coont him happy, for he hed a reward for the black crossin'; laddie, mony a man wud be wullin' tae dee gin he wes luved. What think ye o' a man fechtin' through the ford a' his life wi' nae kindly licht?'

"Geordie wes wae for him, an' telt me in the gloamin', an' it set me thinkin'. Cud it be that puir Drumsheugh micht hae luved an' been refused, an' naebody kent o't? Nane but the Almichty sees the sorrow in ilka hert, an' them 'at suffers maist says least.

"It cam tae me that he must hae luved, for he wes that conseederate wi' Geordie, sae wummanlike in his manner wi' the pillows and

shawls, sae wilie in findin' oot what wud please the laddie; he learned yon in anither place than Muirtown Market. Did ye . . . ever hear onything, doctor? It 's no for clashin' (gossip) a' wud ask, but for peety an' his gudeness tae ma bairn."

"Is 't likely he wud tell ony man, even though he be his freend?" and Maclure fenced bravely, "did ye hear naethin' in the auld days when ye wes on Drumsheugh?"

"No a whisper; he wes never in the mooth o' the Glen, an' he wesna the same then; he wes quiet and couthy, ceevil tae a' the workin' fouk; there wes nae meanness in Drumsheugh in thae days. A 've often thocht nae man in a' the Glen wud hae made a better husband tae some gude wumman than that Drumsheugh. It passes me hoo he turned sae hard and near for thirty years. But dinna ye think the rael Drumsheugh hes come oot again?"

The doctor seemed to be restraining speech.

"He 's no an ordinary man, whatever the Glen may think," and Marget seemed to be meditating. "Noo he wudna enter the hoose, an' he wes that agitat that aince when a' brocht him his tea he let the cup drop on the graivel.

Be sure there 's twa fouk in every ane o 's—ae Drumsheugh 'at focht wi' the dealers an' lived like a miser, an' anither that gied the money for Tammas Mitchell's wife an' nursit ma laddie."

Maclure would have been sadly tried in any case, but it was only a week ago Drumsheugh had made his confession. Besides, he was near the end, and his heart was jealous for his friend. It seemed the worse treachery to be silent.

"There 's juist ae Drumsheugh, Marget Hoo, as ye 're a leevin' wumman, him ye saw in the gairden, wha wud hae denied himsel a meal o' meat tae get thae pictures for yir . . . for Geordie.

"The Glen disna ken Drumsheugh, and never wull this side o' the grave," and the doctor's voice was ringing with passion, and something like tears were in his eyes; "but gin there be a jidgment an' . . . books be opened, the 'ill be ane for Drumtochty, and the bravest page in it 'ill be Drumsheugh's.

"Ye 're astonished, an' it 's nae wunder"—for the look in Marget's grey eyes demanded more—"but what a' say is true. It hes never been for himsel he 's pinched an' bargained;

it wes for . . . for a freend he wantit tae help, an' that wes aye in tribble. He thocht 'at it micht . . . hurt his freend's feelin's and pit him tae shame in his pairish gin it were kent, so he took the shame himsel. A' daurna tell ye mair, for it wud be brakin' bonds atween man and man, but ye 've herd eneuch tae clear Drumsheugh's name wi' ae wumman."

"Mair than cleared, doctor," and Marget's face glowed, "far mair, for ye 've shown me that the Sermon on the Mount is no a dead letter the day, an' ye 've lifted the clood frae a gude man. Noo a 'll juist hae the rael Drumsheugh, Geordie's Drumsheugh," and again Marget thanked Maclure afresh.

For the moment the heroism of the deed had carried her away, but as she went home the pity of it all came over her. For the best part of his life had this man been toiling and suffering, all that another might have comfort, and all this travail without the recompense of love. What patience, humility, tenderness, sacrifice lay in unsuspected people. How long? . . . Perhaps thirty years, and no one knew, and no one said, "Well done!" He had veiled his good deeds well, and accepted

many a jest that must have cut him to the quick. Marget's heart began to warm to this unassuming man as it had not done even by George's chair.

The footpath from the doctor's to Whinnie Knowe passed along the front of the hill above the farm of Drumsheugh, and Marget came to the cottage where she had lived with her mother in the former time. It was empty, and she went into the kitchen. How home-like it had been in those days, and warm, even in winter, for Drumsheugh had made the wright board over the roof and put in new windows. Her mother was never weary speaking of his kindness, yet they were only working people. The snow had drifted down the wide chimney and lay in a heap on the hearth, and Marget shivered. The sorrow of life came upon her—the mother and the son now lying in the kirkyard. Then the blood rushed to her heart again, for love endures and triumphs. But sorrow without love . . . her thoughts returned to Drumsheugh, whose hearthstone was cold indeed. She was now looking down on his home, set in the midst of the snow. Its cheerlessness appealed to her—the grey sombre

house where this man, with his wealth of love, lived alone. Was not that Drumsheugh himself crossing the laigh field, a black figure on the snow, with his dog behind him . . . going home where there was none to welcome him . . . thinking, perhaps, what might have been? . . . Suddenly Marget stopped and opened a gate. . . . Why should he not have company for once in his lonely life . . . if the woman he loved had been hard to him, why should not one woman whom he had not loved take her place for one half hour?

When Drumsheugh came round the corner of the farmhouse, looking old and sad, Marget was waiting, and was amazed at the swift change upon him.

"Ye didna expect me," she said, coming to meet him with the rare smile that lingered round the sweet curves of her lips, "an' maybe it 's a leeberty a 'm takin'; but ye ken kindness breaks a' barriers, an' for the sake o' Geordie a' cudna pass yir hoose this nicht withoot tellin' that ye were in ma hert."

Drumsheugh had not one word to say, but he took her hand in both of his for an instant, and then, instead of going in by the kitchen, as

all visitors were brought, save only the minister and Lord Kilspindie, he led Marget round to the front door with much ceremony. It was only in the lobby he found his tongue, and still he hesitated, as one overcome by some great occasion.

"Ye sud be in the parlour, Marget Hoo, but there 's no been a fire there for mony a year; wull ye come intae ma ain bit room? . . . A' wud like tae see ye there," and Marget saw that he was trembling, as he placed her in a chair before the fire.

"Ye were aince in this room," he said, and now he was looking at her wistfully; "div ye mind? it 's lang syne."

"It wes when a' cam' tae pay oor rent afore we flitted, and ye hed tae seek for change, an' a' thocht ye were angry at oor leavin'."

"No angry, na, na, a' wesna angry . . . it took me half an oor tae find some siller, an' a' the time ye were sittin' in that verra chair . . . that wes the Martinmas ma mither deed . . . ye 'ill no leave withoot yir tea."

After he had gone to tell Leezbeth of his guest, Marget looked round the room, with its worn furniture, its bareness and its comfortless-

ness. This was all he had to come to on a Friday night when he returned from market; out and in here he would go till he died. One touch of tenderness there was in the room, a portrait of his mother above the mantelpiece, and Marget rose to look at it, for she had known her, a woman of deep and silent affection. A letter was lying open below the picture, and this title, printed in clear type at the head, caught Marget's eye:

"Macfarlane and Robertson, Writers,
Kilspindie Buildings,
Muirtown."

Marget's heart suddenly stood still, for it was the firm that sent the seasonable remittances from Whinnie's cousin. This cousin had always been a mystery to her, for Whinnie could tell little about him, and the writers refused all information whatever, allowing them to suppose that he was in America, and chose to give his aid without communication. It had occurred to her that very likely he was afraid of them hanging on a rich relation, and there were times when she was indignant and could not feel grateful for this generosity.

Other times she had longed to send a letter in her name and Whinnie's, telling him how his gifts had lightened their life and kept them in peace and honesty at Whinnie Knowe; but the lawyers had discouraged the idea, and she had feared to press it.

What if this had all been a make-believe, and there had been no cousin . . . and it had been Drumsheugh who had done it all. . . . Was this the object of all his sacrifice . . . to keep a roof above their heads . . . and she had heard him miscalled for a miser and said nothing . . . how could she look him in the face . . . she was sure of it, although there was no proof. . . . A grey light had been gathering all the afternoon in her mind, and now the sun had risen, and everything was light.

Any moment he might come in, and she must know for certain; but it was Leezbeth that entered to lay the tea, looking harder than ever, and evidently seeing no call for this outbreak of hospitality.

"The maister 's gaen upstairs tae clean himsel," said the housekeeper, with a suggestion of contempt. "A' saw naethin' wrang wi' him masel." But Leezbeth was not one that could

move Marget to anger at any time, and now she was waiting for the sight of Drumsheugh's face.

He came in twenty years younger than she had seen him in that dreary field, and, speaking to her as if she had been the Countess of Kilspindie, asked her to pour out the tea.

"Drumsheugh," and he started at the note of earnestness, "before a' sit doon at yir table there 's ae question a' have tae ask an' ye maun answer. Ye may think me a forward wumman, an' ma question may seem like madness, but it 's come intae ma mind, an a 'll hae nae rest till it 's settled."

Marget's courage was near the failing, for it struck her how little she had to go on, and how wild was her idea; but it was too late to retreat, and she also saw the terror on his face.

Drumsheugh stood silent, his eyes fixed on her face, and his hand tightened on the back of a chair.

"Is 't you—are ye the freend 'at hes helped ma man an' me through a' oor tribbles?"

Had he been prepared for the ordeal, or had she opened with a preface, he would have escaped somehow, but all his wiles were vain before Marget's eyes.

"Ye were wi' William Maclure," and Drumsheugh's voice quivered with passion, "an' he telt ye. A 'll never forgie him, no, never, nor speak ae word tae him again, though he be ma dearest freend."

"Dinna blame Doctor Maclure, for a' he did wes in faithfulness an' luve," and Marget told him how she had made her discovery; "but why sud ye be angry that the fouk ye blessed at a sair cost can thank ye face tae face?"

Marget caught something about "a pund or twa," but it was not easy to hear, for Drumsheugh had gone over to the fireplace and turned away his face.

"Mony punds; but that 's the least o 't; it 's what ye suffered for them a' thae years o' savin', and what ye did wi' them, a 'm rememberin'. Weelum micht never hev hed a hoose for me, an' a' micht never hev hed ma man, an' he micht gaen oot o' Whinnie Knowe and been broken-herted this day hed it no been for you.

"Sic kindness as this hes never been kent in the Glen, an' yet we 're nae blude tae you, no mair than onybody in the pairish. Ye 'ill lat me thank ye for ma man an' Geordie an' masel, an' ye 'ill tell me hoo ye ever thocht o' showin' us

sic favour." Marget moved over to Drumsheugh and laid her hand on him in entreaty. He lifted his head and looked her in the face.

"Marget!" and then she understood. He saw the red flow all over her face and fade away again, and the tears fill her eyes and run down her cheeks, before she looked at him steadily, and spoke in a low voice that was very sweet.

"A' never dreamed o' this, an' a 'm not worthy o' sic luve, whereof I hev hed much fruit an' ye hev only pain."

"Ye 're wrang, Marget, for the joy hes gien ower the pain, an' a 've hed the greater gain. Luve roosed me tae wark an' fecht, wha micht hae been a ne'er-dae-weel. Luve savit me frae greed o' siller an' a hard hert. Luve kept me clean in thocht an' deed, for it was ever Marget by nicht an' day. If a 'm a man the day, ye did it, though ye micht never hae kent it. It 's little a' did for ye, but ye 've dune a'thing for me . . . Marget."

After a moment he went on:

"Twenty year ago a' cudna hae spoken wi' ye safely, nor taken yir man 's hand withoot a grudge; but there 's nae sin in ma luve this

day, and a' wudna be ashamed though yir man heard me say, "A' luve ye, Marget.'"

He took her hand and made as though he would have lifted it to his lips, but as he bent she kissed him on the forehead. "This," she said, "for yir great and faithfu' luve."

They talked of many things at tea, with joy running over Drumsheugh's heart; and then spoke of Geordie all the way across the moor, on which the moon was shining. They parted at the edge, where Marget could see the lights of home, and Drumsheugh caught the sorrow of her face, for him that had to go back alone to an empty house.

"Dinna peety me, Marget; a've hed ma reward, an' a'm mair than content."

On reaching home, he opened the family Bible at a place that was marked, and this was what he read to himself: "They which shall be accounted worthy . . . neither marry nor are given in marriage . . . but are as the angels of God in heaven."

PAST REDEMPTION

PAST REDEMPTION

WE had called him Posty so long that Jamie Soutar declared our postman had forgotten the sound of his own name, and had once refused a letter addressed to himself. This was merely Jamie's humour, for Posty held his legal designation in jealous remembrance, and used it for the confusion of pride with much effect.

When Milton, in whom Pharisaism had reached the point of genius, dealt faithfully with Posty at New Year time on his personal habits, and explained that he could not give him money lest he should waste it in strong drink—offering him instead a small volume of an improving character—Posty fell back on his reserves.

"Ma name," he said, eyeing Milton sternly, and giving each syllable its just weight, "is Aircheebald MacKittrick; an' gin ye hae ony complaint against me for neglect o' duty, ye

can lodge it wi' the Postmaister-General, speecifyin' parteeclars, sic as late arrival or omittin' tae deliver, an' a'll hae the sateesfaction o' cairryin' yer letter pairt o' the way tae its desteenation.

"A've ma public capaucity as an officer of the Crown"—Posty was now master of the situation and grew more awful every moment—"an' there a'm open tae creeticism. In ma private capaucity as a free-born Scot, the Queen hersel' has nae business tae interfere wi' me. Whether a' prefer speerits or limejuice for ma tastin' "—Milton had once deceived Posty with the latter seductive fluid—"whether a' mairry ae wife or three"—Milton's third nuptials were still fresh in the Glen—"is a maitter for a man's ain deceesion.

"As regairds the bookie," and Posty held its cheap covers between his thumb and forefinger, "ye'ill excuse me. Jamie Soutar gied me a lend o' his *French Revolution*, an' a'm juist warstlin' thro' wi't. A hev 'na muckle time for readin', an' Tammas Carlyle 's a stiff body, but his buiks are graund feedin'. Besides"—and now Posty gave the *coup de grace*—"thae releegious bookies hae nae logic for an able-bodied

man, an' the laist ane ye gied me was louse in doctrine, juist stinkin' wi' Armeenianism."

Posty was understood to hold an impregnable position with the head of his department, and it was boasted in the Glen that he had carried the mails from Drumtochty to Pitscourie —thirteen miles—and back, every day, excluding Sabbaths, for eight-and-twenty years. It was also believed that he had only been late twice, when the Scourie burn carried away the bridge, and Posty had to go four miles up stream to find a crossing-place, and the day when he struck his head against a stone, negotiating a drift, and lay insensible for three hours.

At five o'clock to a minute Posty appeared every morning in the village shop, which had accumulated during the night a blended fragrance of tea and sugar, and candles and Macdougall's sheep dip, and where Mrs. Robb, our postmistress, received Posty in a negligent undress sanctioned by official business and a spotless widowhood.

"That 's frae the shooting lodge tae his Lordship. It 'ill be aboot the white hares;" and Mrs. Robb began to review the letters with unfailing accuracy. "Ye can aye ken

Drumsheugh's hand; he 's after some siller frae Piggie Walker. Piggie trickit him ainee; he 'ill no dae 't again. 'Miss Howieson.' Ma word! Jean 's no blate tae pit that afore her lassie's name, and her a servant-lass, tho' a 'm no sayin' 'at she disna deserve it, sendin' her mother a post-office order the beginnin' o' ilka month, riglar. 'The Worshipful Chief Bummer of the Sons of Temperance Reform.' Michty, what a title! That 's what they ca' that haverin' body frae the sooth Archie Moncur hed up lecturin' laist winter on teetotalism. Ye were terribly affeckit yersel, Posty, a' heard" —to which sally the immovable face gave no sign. "And here 's ane tae auld Maister Yellowlees, o' Kildrummie, askin' him tae the fast a 'm jalousin'. Sall, the Free Kirk fouk 'ill no bless their minister for his choice. Div ye mind the diveesions o' his laist sermon here on the sparrows, Posty?"

"'We shall consider at length'"—the voice seemed to proceed from a graven image—"'the natural history of the sparrow; next we shall compare the value of sparrow in ancient and modern times; and lastly, we shall apply the

foregoing truth to the spiritual condition of two classes.' "

"That 's it tae a word. It was michty, an' Donald Menzies threipit that he heard the deil lauchin' in the kirk. Weel, that 's a', Posty, an' an Advertiser frae Burnbrae tae his son in the Black Watch. He 'ill be hame sune juist covered wi' medals. A' doot there 's been mair snow thro' the nicht. It 'ill be heavy traivellin'. "

The light of the oil-lamp fell on Posty as he buckled his bag, and threw his figure into relief against a background of boxes and barrels.

A tall man even for Drumtochty, standing six feet three in his boots, who, being only a walking skeleton, ought to have weighed some twelve stone, but with the bone and breadth of him turned the scale at fifteen. His hair was a fiery red, and his bare, hard-featured face two shades darker. No one had ever caught a trace of the inner man on Posty's face, save once and for an instant—when he jumped into Kelpie's hole to save a wee lassie. Elspeth Macfadyen said afterwards "his eyes were graund." He wore the regulation cap on the

back of his head, and as no post-office jacket was big enough to meet on Posty's chest, he looped it with string over a knitted waistcoat. One winter he amazed the Glen by appearing in a waterproof cape, which a humanitarian official had provided for country postmen, but returned after a week to his former estate, declaring that such luxuries were unhealthy and certain to undermine the constitution. His watch was the size of a small turnip, and gave the authorised time to the district, although Posty was always denouncing it for a tendency to lose a minute in the course of summer, an irregularity he used to trace back to a thunderstorm in his grandfather's time. His equipment was completed by an oaken stick, which the smith shod afresh every third year, and which Posty would suddenly swing over his head as he went along. It was supposed that at these times he had settled a point of doctrine.

Mrs. Robb started him with a score of letters, and the rest he gathered as he went. The upper Glen had a box with a lock, at the cross roads, and the theory was that each farm had one key and Posty his own. Every key except

Posty's had been lost long ago, and the box stood open to the light, but Posty always made a vain attempt to sneck the door, and solemnly dropped the letters through the slit. Some farms had hidie holes in the dyke, which Posty could find in the darkest morning; and Hillocks, through sheer force of custom, deposited his correspondence, as his father had done before him, at the root of an ancient beech. Persons handing Posty letters considered it polite to hint at their contents, and any information about our exiles was considered Posty's due. He was hardly ever known to make any remark, and a stranger would have said that he did not hear, but it was noticed that he carried the letters to Whinnie Knowe himself during George's illness, and there is no doubt that he was quite excited the day he brought the tidings of Professor Ross's recovery.

He only became really fluent after he had been tasting, for which facilities were provided at five points on his route, and then he gave himself to theology, in which, from a technical point of view, he could hold his own with any man in the Glen except Lachlan Campbell and Jamie Soutar. As he could not always find

another theologian when he was in this mood he used to walk the faster as a relief to his feelings, and then rest quietly by the roadside for half an hour, wrapt in meditation. You might have set your watch by his rising when he went on his way like a man whose mind was now at ease.

His face was so unconscious and unsuspicious during these brief retreats that it arrested a well-doing tramp one day and exposed him to misconstruction. It seemed to him, as he explained afterwards to our policeman, that Posty might have fainted, and he felt it his duty to take charge of the mail-bag, which its guardian utilised to fill up the hollow of his back. Very gently did the tramp loosen the strap and extricate the bag. He was rising from his knees when a big red hand gripped his arm, and Posty regarded the tree above his head with profound interest.

"A 'm obleeged tae ye," a voice began, "for yir thochtfu' attention, an' the care ye took no tae disturb me. Ye 'ill be a resident in the Glen, a 'm coontin', an' wantin' yir letters," and Posty rose with great deliberation and refastened the strap.

"A' canna mind yir face for the moment, but maybe ye 're veesitin' yir freends. Dinna gang awa till a' find yir letter; it micht hae money in 't, an' it 's plain ye 're needin' 't.

"Surely ye didna mean tae assault a puir helpless cratur," continued Posty, picking up his stick and laying hold of the tramp by his rags, "an' rob him o' Her Majesty's mails? Div ye ken that wud be highway robbery wi' aggravations, and, man, ye micht be hanged and quartered.

"Ye wud never misconduct yirsel like that, but some o' yir freends micht, an' a' wud like tae send them a bit message. . . . Lord's sake, dinna yowl like that, or the neeburs 'ill think a 'm hurtin' ye."

Two hours later the tramp was found behind a hedge anointing his sores with butter, and using language which Posty, as a religious man, would have heard with profound regret.

When this incident came to Doctor Davidson's ears, he took a strong view, and spoke with such frankness and with such a wealth of family illustration, that Posty was much edified and grew eloquent.

"Say awa, doctor, for it 's a' true, an' ye 're

daein' yir duty as a minister faithfu' an' weel. A 'm greatly obleeged tae ye, an' a 'll no forget yir warnin'. Na, na, it 'ill sink.

"Ye 'ill no be angry, though, or think me liteegious gin a' pint oot a difference atween me an' ma brither that ye was neeburin' wi' me in the maitter o' tastin'.

"A 'ill no deny that a' tak ma mornin', and maybe a forenoon, wi' a drap down at Pitscoourie after ma dinner, and juist a moothfu' at Luckie Macpherson's comin' thro' Netheraird, and a body needs something afore he gaes tae bed, but that 's ma ordinar' leemit.

"Noo, Jock is juist in an' oot drammin' frae mornin' tae nicht, baith in Drumtochty an' Muirtown, and that 's bad for the constitution, tae sae naethin' o' morals.

"Forbye that, doctor, if Jock crosses the line, he gets veecious ower politics or the catechism, an' he 'll fecht like a gude ane; but gin a 'm juist a wee overcom'—a 've never been intoxicat' like thae puir, regairdless, toon waufies—a' sit doon for half-an'-oor hummilled an' reflect on the dispensations o' Providence."

Posty had, in fact, three moods: the positive, when he was a man of few words; the

comparative, when he was cheerful and gave himself to the discussion of doctrine; and the superlative, when he had been tasting freely and retired for meditation.

As the years passed, and Posty established himself in all hearts, the philanthropy of the Glen came to a focus on his redemption, to Posty's inward delight, and with results still fondly remembered.

Cunningham, the Free Church scholar and shyest of men, gave his mind to Posty in the intervals of editing Sophocles, and after planning the campaign for four months, allured that worthy into his study, and began operations with much tact.

"Sit down, Posty, sit down, I 'm very glad to see you, and . . . I wanted to thank you for your attention . . . every one in the Glen must be satisfied with . . . with your sense of official duty."

"Thank ye, sir," said Posty, in his dryest voice, anticipating exactly what Cunningham was after, and fixing that unhappy man with a stony stare that brought the perspiration to his forehead.

"There is one thing, however, that I wanted

to say to you, and, Posty, you will understand that it is a . . . little difficult to . . . in fact to mention," and Cunningham fumbled with some Greek proofs.

"What 's yir wull, sir?" inquired Posty, keeping Cunningham under his relentless eye.

"Well, it 's simply," and then Cunningham detected a new flavour in the atmosphere, and concluded that Posty had been given into his hands, "that . . . there 's a very strong smell of spirits in the room."

"A' noticed that masel', sir, the meenut a' cam in, but a' didna like to say onything aboot it," and Posty regarded Cunningham with an expression of sympathetic toleration.

"You don't mean to say," and Cunningham was much agitated, "that you think . . ."

"Dinna pit yirsel' aboot, sir," said Posty, in a consoling voice, "or suppose a' wud say a word ootside this room. Na, na, there 's times a 'm the better o' a gless masel', an' it 's no possible ye cud trachle through the Greek wi-hoot a bit tonic; but ye 're safe wi' me," said Posty, departing at the right moment, and he kept his word. But Cunningham was so scandalised that he let out the conversation, and

the Glen was happy for a month over it, for they loved both men, each in his own way.

When Jock MacKittrick died suddenly Cunningham expressed his sympathy with Posty, and produced an unexpected impression on that self-contained man.

"It was only last evening that I saw you and your brother part in the village; it must be a terrible blow to you."

"Ye saw that?" broke in Posty; "then ye 're the only man in the Glen that kens what a sore heart a 'm cairryin' the day. Juist ablow the public hoose, and he gaed up and a' gaed hame; it 's a fact.

"The fouk are sayin' the day as a' cam alang the Glen, 'Ye 'ill miss Jock, Posty, he slippit aff afore his time.' An' a juist gie them an, 'Ou, aye, it maks a difference,' but they dinna ken ma secret; hooever did ye licht on it?

"There 's nae use denyin' 't that he said tae me, 'Ye 'ill tak yir evenin', Posty,' for Jock aye ca'd me that—he was prood o 't bein' in the faimily—an' gin ye ask me what cam ower me that a' sud hae refused him a' canna tell.

"'Na, na, Jock,' a' said, 'a 've hed eneuch the day, an' a 'm gaein' hame;' he lookit at

me, but a' wes dour, an' noo it's ower late; a'll never taste wi' Jock again." And Posty's iron manner failed, and for once in his life he was profoundly affected.

The last philanthropist who tried his hand on Posty before he died was "the Colonel" as we called him—that fine hearty old warrior who stayed with the Carnegies at the Lodge, and had come to grief over Jamie Soutar at the evangelistic meeting. The Colonel was certain that he could manage Posty, for he was great at what he called "button-holing," and so he had his second disaster, understanding neither Drumtochty nor Posty. Being full of the simplest guile he joined Posty on the road and spun the most delightful Indian yarns, which were all intended to show what splendid fellows his soldiers were, and how they ruined themselves with drink. Posty gave most patient attention and only broke silence twice.

"Drinkin'—if ye are meanin' intoxication—is waur than a failin', it's a sin an' no a licht ane. Ye ken whar the drunkards gang tae in the end, but dinna let me interrupt ye."

Later he inquired anxiously where the Colon-

el's regiment had been recruited, and was much relieved by the answer.

"A' wes thinkin' they cudna be oor lads that lat the drink get the upper hand; they sud be able tae tak their drappie cannily an' no mak fules o' themselves, but a 've heard that a gless or twa o' speerits 'ill turn their heads in the sooth."

When the Colonel, considerably damped by these preliminaries, came to close grips, Posty took a stand.

"'Pledge' did ye say, Colonel; na, na, a' daurna hae onything tae dae wi' sic devices, they 're naething else than vows, an' vows are aboleeshed in this dispensation. The Catholics keep them up a 'm informed, but a 'm a Protestant, an' ma conscience wudna alloo me tae sign.

"But a 'm terribly pleased wi' yir stories, sir, an' they gar the time pass fine, an' ye maunna be offended. Gin ye cud meet me the morn at the boonds o' the pairish, a 'm willin' tae argie the maitter o' vows up the Glen juist tae shairpen oor minds.

"As for the bit ribbon," and Posty held it as if it carried infection, "gin ye hed belanged tae

Drumtochty ye wud hae kent nae man cud wear sic a thing. Oor fouk hae an' awfu' sense o' humour; it 's sae deep they canna lauch, but they wud juist look at the man wi' a ribbon on, an' as sure 's deith they wudna be weel for the rest o' the day.

"Besides, Colonel, a 'm suspeckin' that there 's juist ae preceedent for the ribbon in the Bible, that wes the Pharisees, when they made broad their phylacteries, and a' ne 'er likit thae gentry."

"Sall gin ilka man began tae pit his virtues on his coat, an' did it honest, it wud be a show at kirk and market. Milton wud hae naethin' but yir ribbon, an' Burnbrae, wha 's the best man in the Glen, wudna hae room on his Sabbath coat for his decorations," and Posty chuckled inwardly to the horror of the Colonel.

Three days afterwards the great tragedy happened, and no one needed again to trouble himself about Posty. It was summer time, with thunder in the air, and heavy black clouds above Glen Urtach. June was the month in which Mrs. Macfadyen scoured her blankets, and as her burn was nearly dry, she transferred her apparatus to the bank of the Tochty, where

a pool below the mill gave her a sure supply of water. Elspeth lit a fire beneath the birches on the bank, and boiled the water. She plunged the blankets into a huge tub, and kilting up her coats danced therein powerfully, with many a direction to Elsie, her seven-year-old, to "see ye dinna fa' in, or ye 'll be carried intae the Kelpie's Hole ablow, an' it 'll no be yir mither can bring you oot."

The sun was still shining brightly on the Glen, when the distant storm burst on Ben Hornish, whose steep sides drain into the Urtach, that ends in the Tochty. Down the Tochty came the first wave, three feet high, bringing on its foaming yeasty waters branches of trees, two young lambs, a stool from some cottage door, a shepherd's plaid, and all kinds of drift from eddies that had been swept clean. Elspeth heard the roar, and lifted her eyes to see Elsie, who had been playing too near the edge, swept away into the pool beneath, that in less than a minute was a seething cauldron of water that whirled round and round against the rocks before it rushed down the bed of the river.

"Ma bairn! ma bairn! God hae mercy upon her!" and Elspeth's cry ran through the bonnie

birk wood and rose through the smiling sky to a God that seemed to give no heed.

"Whar is she?" was all Posty asked, tearing off his coat and waistcoat, for he had heard the cry as he was going to the mill, and took the lade at a leap to lose no time.

"Yonder, Posty, but ye . . ."

He was already in the depths, while the mother hung over the edge of the merciless flood. It seemed an hour—it was not actually a minute—before he appeared, with the blood pouring from a gash on his forehead, and hung for a few seconds on a rock for air.

"Come oot, Posty, ye hae a wife and bairns, an' ye 'll be drooned;" for Elspeth was a brave-hearted, unselfish woman.

"A 'll hae Elsie first," and down he went again, where the torrent raged against the rocks.

This time he came up at once, with Elsie, a poor little bundle, in his arms.

"Tak' her quick," he gasped, clinging with one hand to a jagged point.

And Elspeth had no sooner gripped Elsie by her frock than Posty flung up his arms, and was whirled down the river, now running like a

mill-race, and Elspeth fancied she saw him turning over and over, for he seemed to be insensible.

Within an hour they found his body down below the Lodge with many wounds on it, besides that gash, and they knew at once that he had been dashed to death against the stones.

They carried him to the Lodge—the Colonel insisted on being a bearer—and for two hours by the clock they did their best for Posty.

"It 's no a drop o' water 'ill droon Posty," said Jamie Soutar, "and that his ain Tochty, an' as for a clout (blow) on the head, what 's that tae a man like Posty! he 'll be on the road the mornin'." But Jamie spoke with the fierce assurance of a man that fears the worst and is afraid of breaking down.

"The water hes been ower muckle for him aifter a'," our cynic said to Archie Moncur, who had long striven to make a teetotaller of Posty, as they went home together, "tho' he didna give in tae the end."

"A' doot a' wes a wee hard on him, Jamie" —Archie had the tenderest heart in the Glen and was much loved—"but there wes nae man a' like 't better."

"Yer tongue wes naithin' tae mine, Airchie, when a' yoke 't on him, but he bore nae ill will, did Posty, he had an awfu' respeck for ye an' aye spoke o' ye as his freend."

"Sae a' wes—wha wudna be—he hed a true heart hed Posty, and nae jukery-packery (trickery) aboot him."

"An' a graund heid tae," went on Jamie; "there wes naebody in the Glen cud meet him in theology, except maybe Lachlan, and did ye ever hear him say an ill word aboot ony body?"

"Never, Jamie, an' there wes naebody he wesna interested in; the black-edged letters aye burned his fingers—he hated tae deliver them. He wes abody's freend wes Posty," went on Archie, "an' naebody's enemy."

"He deed like a man," concluded Jamie; "there 's juist anither consolation—the lassie 's comin' roond fine."

When the new Free Kirk minister was settled in Drumtochty, Jamie told him the story on the road one day and put him to the test.

"What think ye, sir, becam' o' Posty on the ither side?" and Jamie fixed his eyes on Carmichael.

The minister's face grew still whiter.

"Did ye ever read what shall be done to any man that hurts one of God's bairns?"

"Fine," answered Jamie, with relish, "a millstane aboot his neck, an' intae the depths o' the sea."

"Then, it seems to me that it must be well with Posty, who went into the depths and brought a bairn up at the cost of his life," and Carmichael added softly, "whose angel doth continually behold the face of the Father."

"Yir hand, sir," said Jamie, and when the great heresy trial began at Muirtown, Jamie prophesied Carmichael's triumphant acquittal, declaring him a theologian of the first order.

GOOD NEWS FROM A FAR COUNTRY

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NARROW circumstances and high spirit drove forth some half-dozen young men and women from the Glen every year, to earn their living in the cities of the South. They carried with them, as a working capital, sound education, unflagging industry, absolute integrity, and an undying attachment to Drumtochty. Their one necessary luxury was a weekly copy of the *Muirtown Advertiser*, which four servant lasses would share between them and circulate at church doors, carefully wrapt in a page of some common daily, and their one hour of unmixed enjoyment its careful perusal, column by column, from the first word to the last. It would have been foolishness to omit the advertisements, for you might have missed the name of Drumsheugh in connection with a sale of stirks; and although at home no Drumtochty person allowed himself to take an interest in

the affairs of Kildrummie or Netheraird, yet the very names of neighbouring parishes sounded kindly at the distance of Glasgow. One paragraph was kept for the last, and read from six to twelve times, because it was headed Drumtochty, and gave an account of the annual ploughing match, or the school examination, or the flower show, or a winter lecture, when Jamie Soutar had proposed the vote of thanks. Poor little news and names hard of pronunciation; but the girl sitting alone by the kitchen fire—her fellow servants gone to bed—or the settler in the far North-west—for he also got his *Advertiser* after long delays—felt the caller air blowing down the Glen, and saw the sun shining on the Tochty below the mill, and went up between the pinks and moss-roses to the dear old door—ah me! the click of the garden gate—and heard again the sound of the Hundredth Psalm in the parish kirk.

If one wished to take a complete census of our people in Glasgow, he had only to attend when Doctor Davidson preached on the fast day, and make his way afterwards to the vestry door.

"There 's a gude puckle fouk waitin' tae see ye, sir," the city beadle would say to the doctor, with much ceremony; "a 'm judgin' they 're frae yir ain pairish. Is it yir wull they be admitted?"

Then in they came, craftsmen in stone and iron, clerks in offices and students from the University, housemaids and working men's wives, without distinction of persons, having spent the last ten minutes in exchanging news and magnifying the sermon. The doctor gave a Christian name to each, and some personal message from the Glen, while they, in turn, did their best to reduce his hand to pulp, and declared aloud that preaching like his could not be got outside Drumtochty, to the huge delight of Bigheart, minister of the church, who was also a Chaplain to the Queen and all Scotland.

The Dispersion endured any sacrifice to visit the old Glen, and made their appearance from various places, at regular intervals, like Jews coming up to Jerusalem. An exile was careful to arrive at Muirtown Station on a Friday afternoon, so that he might join the Drumtochty contingent on their way home from market. It is not to be supposed, however,

that there was any demonstration when he showed himself on the familiar platform where Drumtochty men compared notes with other parishes at the doors of the Dunleith train.

"Is that you, Robert? ye 'ill be gaein' wast the nicht," was the only indication Hillocks would give before the general public that he had recognised young Netherton after three years' absence, and then he would complete his judgment on the potato crop as if nothing had happened.

"Ye 're there, aifter a', man; a' wes feared the sooth train micht be late," was all the length even Netherton's paternal feelings would carry him for the time; "did ye see that yir box wes pit in the van?" and the father and son might travel in different compartments to the Junction. Drumtochty retained still some reticence, and did not conduct its emotions in public, but it had a heart. When the van of the Dunleith train had cleared the Junction and Drumtochty was left to itself—for Kildrummie did not really count—it was as when winter melts into spring.

"Hoo are ye, Robert, hoo are ye? gled tae see ye," Drumsheugh would say, examining the

transformed figure from head to foot; "man, a' wud hardly hae kent ye. Come awa an' gie 's yir news," and the head of the commonwealth led the way to our third with Robert, Drumtochty closing in behind.

Preliminaries were disposed of in the run to Kildrummie, and as the little company made their way through the pine woods, and down one side of the Glen, and over the Tochty bridge, and up the other slope to the parting of the ways, Robert was straitly questioned about the magnitude of the work he did in Glasgow, and the customs of the people, and the well-being of every single Drumtochty person in that city, and chiefly as to the sermons he had heard, their texts and treatment. On Sabbath the group at the kirk door would open up at Robert's approach, but he would only nod in a shamefaced way to his friends and pass on; for it was our etiquette that instead of remaining to gossip, a son should on such occasions go in with his mother and sit beside her in the pew, who on her part would mistake the psalm that he might find it for her, and pay such elaborate attention to the sermon that every one knew she was thinking only of her son.

If a Drumtochty man distinguished himself in the great world, then the Glen invested his people with vicarious honour, and gathered greedily every scrap of news. Piggie Walker himself, although only an associate of the parish by marriage and many transactions, would not have visited David Ross in the Upper Glen, with a view to potatoes, without inquiring for David's son the Professor; and after the sale was effected that astute man would settle down with genuine delight to hear the last letter, dated from a Colonial University and containing an account of the Professor's new discovery.

It was Piggie that asked for the letter; David would not have offered to read it for a year's rent. Drumtochty parents with promising sons lived in terror lest secret pride should give them away and they be accused behind their backs of "blawing," which in a weaker speech is translated boasting.

David considered, with justice, that they ought to take special care, and tried to guide his wife with discretion.

"We maun be cannie wi' John's title, wumman, for ye ken Professor is a by-ordinar' word;

a' coont it equal tae Earl at the verra least; an' it wudna dae tae be aye usin' 't.

"Ye micht say 't ainee in a conversation, juist lettin' it slip oot by accident this wy, 'the Professor wes sayin' in his laist letter—a' mean, oor son in Australy'—but a' wud ca' him John at ither times. Pride 's an awfu' mischief, Meg."

"Ye 're as prood as a 'm masel, David, and there 's nae use ye scoldin' at me for giein' oor laddie the honour he won wi' his brain an' wark," and the mother flared up. "A 'm no feared what the neeburs say. Professor he is, an' Professor a 'll ca' him; ye 'ill maybe be sayin' Jock next, tae show ye 're humble."

"Dinna tak me up sae shairp, gude wife, or think a' wud mak little o' John; but the Almichty hesna gien ilka faimily a Professor, an' a 'm no wantin' tae hurt oor neeburs, an' them sae ta'en up wi' him themsels. Ye micht read his laist letter again, wumman; there 's a bit a 've near forgotten."

Meg went to the drawers where she kept the clothes he wore as a boy, and the silk dress he gave her when he received his great appointment, and the copies of his books bound in

morocco, which he sent home with this inscription:

"To my Father and Mother.

"From the Author;"

and every scrap of paper about him and from him she had ever received.

The letter is taken from an old stocking, and, as she pretends to some difficulty in finding the place, Meg is obliged to read it for the forty-ninth time throughout from the name of the University at the head to the signature:

"Heart's love to you both from

"Your ever affectionate son,

"JOHN ROSS;"

while David makes as though he had missed a word now and again in order to prolong the pleasure.

It was not hard to tell that he had such a letter in his pocket on the Sabbath, for the kirkyard was very cunning in its sympathy.

"Hoo 's the Professor keepin' when ye heard laist, Bogleigh?" Drumsheugh would say, skilfully leading up to the one subject, and careful to give David his territorial designation, although it was a very small farm indeed, "he 'ill

send a scrape o' the pen at a time, a 'm expeckin', gin he hes a meenut tae spare."

"Busy or no busy," answers Bogleigh, "he maks time tae write hame. His mither hes hed a letter frae John aince a week withoot fail sin he left Bogleigh a laddie o' saxteen for Edinburgh.

"They 're no juist twa or three lines, aither, but sax an' aught sheets," continued David, warming. "An' the names, they cowe a'thing for length an' learnin'. Wud ye believe it, the Professor tells his mither every article he writes, and a' the wark he dis.

"He wes tellin 's laist letter aboot some graund discovery he 's feenished, an' they 're threatenin' tae gie him a new title for 't. A 'm no juist sure what it means, but it disna maitter, gin the laddie dis his duty and keep his health," and David affected to close the subject. "It 's fell warm the day."

"Ye 'll no hae that letter on ye, Bogie?" inquired Jamie Soutar anxiously. "Gin ye cud pit yir hand on 't, the neeburs wud like tae hear whatna honour the Professor 's gotten."

"Na, na, Jamie, it disna dae for a body tae be deavin' (deafening) the countryside wi' clavers

aboot his bairns; if it hedna been Drumsheugh speirin' for John a' wudna hae said a word, but a 'm muckle obleeged, and sae is the laddie, for a' mind hoo he wrote, 'My respects to the neighbours on Sabbath.'"

"That wes rael handsome," began Whinnie, much impressed by "respects," "but a' mind the Professor was aye a douce——"

"Div ye think, Bogleigh, that the Professor belongs tae yersel noo an' the gude wife," broke in Jamie, "juist as if he were some ordinar' man? Na, na; gin a laddie gaes up frae the Glen tae the University, an' comes oot at the tap o' his classes, bringin' hame three medals ilka spring, an' opens secret things in nature that naebody kent afore, an' is selected by Government tae foond places o' learnin' ayont the sea, that laddie belangs tae Drumtochty.

"Div ye mind the day his life wes in the London *Times*, and Drumsheugh read it at the Junction? 'This eminent man of science was born at Drumtochty in Perthshire, and received his early education at the parish school.'"

"Ye hae 't tae a word, Jamie," said Drumsheugh, and passed his box, in name of the Glen, as it were, to Domsie.

"Oor standin' measure," concluded Jamie, "leavin' oot Airchie Moncur and masel, will rin tae aboot sax feet, but a' coontit that we gaed up the hill that nicht wi' fower inches a man tae spare. Whar 's that letter, Bogleigh?"

After a feint of seeking it in his trousers, where he was as likely to carry it as the family Bible, David produced it from an inner breast pocket, wrapped in newspaper, and handed it to Domsie without a word.

"Div ye want me tae read it?"—as if this had not been the schoolmaster's due. "Weel, weel, a 'll dae ma best," and then Domsie laid himself out to do justice to the Professor's letter, while Drumtochty wagged its head in admiration.

"Fellow of the Royal Society," and Domsie became solemn to the height of reverence; "this cowes a'thing. A 'm credibly informed that this is the highest honour given tae learnin' in oor land; a 'ill be boond the 'll no be anither F.R.S. in sax coonties; may be no mair than twa or three in braid Scotland."

"It 's the graundest thing the Glen 's dune yet," and Jamie took up the strain; "he 's

M.A. already, an' some ither letters ; ye cudna rin them ower?"

Then Domsie gave John Ross's degrees one by one. "That comes tae five, makin' nae mention o' ither honours; there 's thirty-one degrees in the Glen the noo, and John heads the list, if a' micht call a Professor by a laddie's name."

"Wha hes a better richt?" said the father, with much spirit; "ye laid the foondation o 't a', an' he often said that himsel."

Opinion differed whether David or Domsie looked prouder in kirk that day, but Jamie inclined to Domsie, whom he had detected counting the degrees over again during the chapter.

Four Sundays after David appeared in the kirkyard with such woe upon his face that Drumsheugh could only imagine one reason, and omitted preliminaries.

"Naethin' wrang wi' the Professor, Bogleigh?" and Domsie held his pinch in mid air.

"John wes deein' when this letter left, an' noo he 'ill maybe . . . be dead an' buried . . . his mither an' me were ower prood o' him, but

ye ken hoo . . . gude," and the old man broke down utterly.

They looked helplessly at one another, averting their gaze from the Professor's father, and then Drumsheugh took hold of the situation.

"This is no lichtsome, Dauvid, an' the neeburs share yir tribble, but dinna gie up houp;" and then Drumsheugh read the letter from Australia, while Hillocks and Whinnie, turning their backs on David, sheltered his grief from public view.

"DEAR MR. ROSS,—You will have noticed that the last letter from my friend Dr. Ross was written in a feeble hand. He was laid down about three weeks ago with what has turned out to be typhoid fever, and ought not to have seen paper. But we considered the case a mild one, and he was determined to send his usual letter home. Now the disease has taken a bad turn, and he is quite delirious, mentioning his mother and his old schoolmaster by turns, and thinking that he is again in Drumtochty. His colleagues in medicine are consulting twice a day about him, and everything will be done for one we all admire and love. But he is very low, and I think it

right to prepare you for what may be bad news.—Believe me, with much respect, yours faithfully,

"FREDERICK ST. CLAIR."

"A 've seen a mair cheerfu' letter," and Drumsheugh looked at the fathers from above his spectacles; "but it micht be waur. A 'll guarantee the Professor 's no as far through wi 't as Saunders, an' yonder he is alive and livin' like," nodding in the direction where that brawny man propped up the gable of the kirk with his shoulders and maintained a massive silence with Tammas Mitchell.

"Nae doot, nae doot," said Hillocks, deriving just encouragement from the study of Saunders's figure; "aifter the wy Weelum Maclure brocht Saunders through a' wud houp for the best gin a' wes Bogleigh."

"Sae a' wud, neeburs," and David came forth again, "gin we hed oor laddie at hame an' oor ain man tae guide him. But there 's nae Weelum Maclure oot yonder—naebody but strangers."

"We micht ask the doctor tae pit up a prayer," suggested Hillocks; "it cudna dae ony mischief, an' it 's aye a comfort."

"He daurna dae't," cried David, whose mind was quickened by grief; "it 'ill be a' ower lang syne, an' it 's no lawfu' tae pray for . . . the dead."

"Dinna be feared, Bogie," said Jamie; "the doctor 'ill tak the responsibeelity himsel, and ye may be sure he 'ill get some road oot o' the wood. It wud be a puir kirk the day gin we cudna plead wi' the Almichty for oor Professor."

"Ye hae the word, Jamie," said Drumsheugh, "an' a 'll gang in an' tell the doctor masel;" but Whinnie confessed afterwards that he thought this prayer beyond even the doctor.

It followed the petition for the harvest, and this was how it ran—the Free Kirk people had it word for word by Monday—

"Remember, we beseech Thee, most merciful Father, a father and mother who wait with anxious hearts for tidings of their only son, and grant that, before this week be over, Thy servant who is charged with many messages to this parish may bring to them good news from a far country."

"Didna a' tell ye?" triumphed Jamie, going

down to the gate, while Posty, who had required the whole length of the sermon to recognise himself, departed, much lifted, declaring aloud:

"The 'll be nae black edge in the bag next Friday, or a 'm no postman o' Drumtochty."

Letters for Bogleigh were left about two o'clock in a box on the main road two miles distant, and brought up by the scholars in the evening; but it was agreed early in the week that David and his wife should go down and receive the letter from Posty's own hands on Friday. In order not to be late, Meg rose at four that morning—but indeed she need not have gone to bed—and by eight o'clock was afraid they might be late. Three times she took out and rearranged her treasures, and three times broke down utterly, because she would never see her laddie again. They followed Posty from his start outwards, and were comforted about eleven with the thought that he was on the return journey.

"He 's fairly aff for hame noo, wumman," David would say, "an' wheepin' through Netheraird; he 's no mair than ten mile awa, a 'll warrant, an' he 's a terrible walker."

"He 'ill surely no be tastin' at the Netheraird public-hoose, Dauvid, an' loiterin'; a 've kent him no be at the box till half three."

"Na, na, there 's nae fear o' Posty the day; a 'll be boond he 's savin' every meenut; ye mind hoo prood he wes tae bring the letter wi' the Professor's appintment."

"Isn 't it michty tae think we 're pittin' aff the time here," and Meg began to get ready, "when he 's maybe in the pairish already?"

It was exactly a quarter past twelve when the two old people sat down in the shadow of the firs above the box to wait for the first sight of Posty.

"A' daurna meet him, Dauvid, aifter a'," she said; "we 'ill juist watch him pit the letter in, and slip doon when he 's gane, an' . . . oh! but a' ken what it 'ill be."

"A 'm expeckin tae hear John 's on the mend masel," said David manfully, and he set himself to fortify his wife with Saunders's case and the doctor's prayer, till she lifted her head again and watched.

A summer wind passed over the pines, the wood-pigeons cooed above their heads, rabbits ran out and in beside them, the burn below

made a pleasant sound, a sense of the Divine Love descended on their hearts.

"The Almichty," whispered Meg, "'ill surely no tak awa oor only bairn . . . an' him dune sae weel . . . an' sae gude a son. . . A' wes coontin' on him comin' hame next year . . . an' seein' him aince mair . . . afore a' deed."

A bread cart from Kildrummie lumbered along the road. Maclure passed on Jess at a sharp trot. A company of tourists returning from Glen Urtach sang "Will ye no come back again?" Donald Menzies also sang as he brought a horse from the smiddy, but it was a psalm—

> "I to the hills will lift my eyes,
> From whence doth come mine aid."

"Can ye no see him yet, Dauvid? a' 'doot he 's hed an accident; it maun be lang past the 'oor noo. Yonder he is."

But it was only a tramp, who hesitated at the foot of the upland road, and then continued his way to the village, careless who lived or died, so that he had meat and drink.

Round the distant corner Posty came at last, half an hour before his time and half a mile the hour above his common speed.

"Wull ye gang doon, Meg?"

"A' canna; bring 't up tae me when he 's past," and she sat down again and covered her face; "tell me gin it 's come."

Posty halted and swung round his bag; he took out the packet of road-side letters and dropped four into the box without attention; then he kept a fifth in his hands and hesitated; he held it up against the light as if he would have read its contents.

He 's got it, an', Meg, wumman, a' dinna see . . . ony black on 't."

Posty looked at his watch, and said aloud:

"A 'll risk the time; it 'ill no tak mair than an 'oor," and he leaped the dyke.

"Lord's sake, Bogleigh, is that you? A' wes thinkin' o' whuppin' round yir wy the day for a change; in fac," and Posty's effort at in difference collapsed, "word 's come frae Australy."

"Wull ye . . . open 't for 's? ma hand 's . . . no verra steady, an' the gude wife . . . hesna her glesses."

"Mr. David Ross,
Farmer,
Bogleigh,
Drumtochty,
Scotland."

read Posty, with official importance; that 's a' richt, at ony rate."

"He aye sent it tae his mither himsel; juist read the beginnin', Posty . . . that 'ill be eneuch." And David fixed his eyes on the letter, while Meg dared not breathe.

"It affords me unspeakable satisfaction," began Posty, in a low voice, and then he suddenly lifted it up in victory, "to send good news. The very day I wrote the worst symptoms disappeared, and your son is now on the way to recovery."

"There 's fower pages, an' a' can read, 'no cause now for alarm,' but ye canna better the affset. A' kent what it wud be; the doctor said gude news in his prayer, and that 's the verra word.

"Here, Mistress Ross, is the letter, for Bogleigh 's no fit tae tak chairge o 't. . . . Me? A 've dune naethin' but cairry it.

"A 'll no deny, though, a' wud hae liket fine tae hev seen the inside o 't doon bye; sall, as sune as a' passed the boondary o' the pairish the fouk set on me, but a' cud say naethin' mair than this, 'There 's an Australy letter, and it 's no black-edged.'

"A 'm aff noo," buckling his bag, for Mrs. Ross had risen and was threatening to seize his hand; "an' it 's worth gaein' up the Glen the day wi' sic news. A 'll warrant Domsie 's on the road lang syne. Ye 'ill hae the Professor wi' ye in the Kirk again, gude wife, an' the neeburs 'ill be prood tae see ye baith gang in thegither," and Posty leapt into the road like a four-year-old.

Beginning at the manse, and continuing unto Drumsheugh, there was not a house along the road where Posty did not give a cry that day, and it was affirmed on credible evidence in the kirkyard next Sabbath that he stood upon a dyke and made Hillocks understand at the distance of two fields' breadth that Drumtochty had still a Professor.

JAMIE

I

A NIPPY TONGUE

EACH community has its own etiquette, and in an advanced state of civilisation such beautiful words as "Mister" and "Missus" are on every one's tongue, some lonely Northerner perhaps saying "Mistress," to the amusement of footmen and other persons of refinement. While Drumtochty was in its natural state, and the influence of Southern culture had scarcely begun to play on its simplicity, we had other forms of speech. It was good manners to call a farmer by his place, and had any one addressed Hillocks as Mr. Stirton, that worthy man would have been much startled. Except on envelopes, full-length names were reserved for the heading of roups and the death column in newspapers, and so had acquired a flavour of ceremonious solemnity. Ploughmen were distinguished by their Christian names in some easy vernacular

form, and the sudden introduction of the surname could only be justified by a furrow that suggested the segment of a circle or a return from Kildrummie fair minus a cart and two horses. His lordship might notice Drumsheugh's foreman as he passed with a "Busy as usual, Baxter," and not be suspected of offence, but other men had said "Fine fillin' day, Saunders," to which Saunders would have most likely deigned no answer save a motion of the right shoulder. Dignitaries had their titles by prescriptive right, the parish minister being "Doctor" and the schoolmaster "Dominie," but only one man in the Glen had the distinction of a diminutive, and it was a standing evidence of his place in our hearts.

It was mentioned with relish that a Muirtown merchant raiding for honey, having inquired of Whinnie Knowe where Mr. James Soutar lived, had been gravely informed that no person of that name lived in the parish, and would have departed to search for him in Kildrummie had he not chanced on Drumsheugh.

"Div ye mean Jamie?" and when Hillocks met him two miles further on he was still feasting on the incident.

"He said 'Mister James Soutar' as sure as ye're lookin' me in the face, Hillocks," and both tasted the humour of the situation, which owed nothing to artifice, but sprang from the irony of circumstances.

"Jamie," ejaculated Drumsheugh, and a flood of recollections—scenes, stories, incidents—swept across his face. Had he been a Kildrummie man, he would have laughed at the things he heard and saw.

"Sall," wound up Hillocks, who had been tasting the same passed in silence, "he's an awfu' body, Jamie; ye'ill no get the marra (equal) of him in six pairishes."

Drumtochty did not ground its admiration of Jamie on his personal appearance, which lent itself to criticism and suggested a fine carelessness on the part of nature. His head was too large for his body, and rested on his chest. One shoulder had a twist forward which invested Jamie with an air of aggression. His legs were constructed on the principle that one knee said to the other, If you let me pass this time, I 'll let you pass next time.

"Gin ye were juist tae luke at Jamie, ye micht ca' him a shachlin' (shambling) cratur,"

Drumsheugh once remarked, leaving it to be inferred that the understanding mind could alone appreciate him, and that in this matter Drumtochty walked by faith and not by sight. His rate of progression was over four miles an hour, but this method was sideways, and was so wonderful, not to say impressive, that even a phlegmatic character like Drumsheugh's Saunders had been known to follow Jamie's back view till it disappeared, and then to say "michty," with deliberation. Young animals that developed any marked individuality in gait were named after Jamie without offence, and were understood to have given pledges of intelligence, since it was believed that nature worked on the principle of compensation.

"There 's been an oversicht aboot Jamie's legs, but there 's naethin' wrang wi' his tongue," and it was the general judgment that it did not "shachle."

Jamie's gift of speech was much aided by eyes that were enough to redeem many defects in the under building. They were blue—not the soft azure of the South, but the steely colour of a Scottish loch in sunshine, with a north-east wind blowing—a keen, merciless,

penetrating blue. It gave a shock to find them fastened on one when he did not know Jamie was paying any attention and they sobered him in an instant. Fallacies, cant, false sentiment, and every form of unreality shrivelled up before that gaze, and there were times one dared not emerge from the shelter of the multiplication table. He had a way of watching an eloquent stranger till the man's sentences fell to pieces and died away in murmurs before he said "Ay, ay," that was very effective; and when he repeated this deliverance, after a pause of thirty seconds, even Whinnie understood that the kirkyard had been listening to nonsense.

It seems yesterday that Milton—who had come into the Glen a month before from Muirtown, and visited the two churches to detect errors for two months—was explaining the signs of true religion to the silent kirkyard, when he caught Jamie's eye and fell away into the weather, and the minister of Kildrummie's son, who was preaching for the doctor, and winding up his sermon with an incredible anecdote, came under the spell at the distance of the pulpit, and only saved himself by giving out a psalm. The man who passed Jamie's eye

was true to the backbone, and might open his mouth in any place.

Every man requires room for the play of his genius, and it was generally agreed that Jamie, who had pricked many wind bags, came to his height in dealing with Milton.

"Milton wes faithfu' wi' ye in the third comin' up frae the Junction on Friday nicht, a'm hearin', Drumsheugh; the fouk say ye were that affeckit ye cud hardly gie yir ticket tae Peter."

"He 's the maist barefaced (impudent) wratch that 's ever been seen in this Glen," and Drumsheugh went at large; "he 'ill ask ye questions nae man hes ony richt tae pit tae neebur. An' a wakely cratur as weel, greetin' an' whinin' like a bairn."

"A 'm astonished at ye," said Jamie in grave rebuke, "an' you an elder. Ye sud be thankfu' sic a gude man hes come tae the pairish. There 's naethin' but dry banes, he says, but he 's expeckin' tae roose us afore he 's dune.

"He 's no feared, a 'll admit," continued Jamie, "but a 'm no sae sure that he 's wakely; ye didna hear o' him an' his pairtner in the cloth shop at Muirtown."

The kirkyard thirsted for the news.

"Weel, ye see, the pairtner pit in five hundert, an' Milton pit in five, and they cairried on business for sax year thegither. They separated laist spring, an' Milton cam oot wi' a thoo sand an' the pairtner wi' naethin'.

"Milton hed been sairly tried wi' the ither man's warldliness, walkin' on Sabbath an' siclike, an' he wes sayin' in the train that he felt like Jacob wi' Esau all the time. It 's grand tae hae the poor o' Bible illustration. A thoosand wud juist stock Milton fine, an' leave a note or twa in the bank.

"What a 'm feared for is that some misguided Drumtochty man micht try tae tak advantage o' Milton in a bargain an' get a jidgment. Providence, ye ken, watches ower thae simple-minded craturs, an' it 's juist wunnerfu' hoo they come aff in the end. But a 'm dootin' that he 's no strong; he hes tae tak care o' himsel.''

As the fathers waited patiently for more, Jamie continued in his most casual tone:

"He cairried a box in his hand Friday a week, an' pit it ablow the seat in the kerridge; it wes aboot auchteen inches square and nine deep, an'

markit 'Hoggs' Patent Soap;' thae new soaps are brittle; a' dinna wunner he wes carefu'.

"Ye sud hae heard him on the drinkin' at Muirtown market an' the duty of total abstinence; he wantit Hillocks tae tak the pledge at the Junction, but Drumtochty fouk 's dour an' ill tae manage.

"Milton wes that agitat when he got tae Kildrummie that he lat his box fa' on the platform; a' wes juist wunnerin' whether they sell soap in bottles noo, when he said, 'It 's ma medeecine, for the circulation o' the blood; a 'm a frail vessel.'

"A' thocht that we micht hae been kinder tae Milton, an' him sic a sufferer; twelve quart bottles is a sair allowance o' medeecine for ae puir man," and a far-away look came into Jamie's face.

Jamie's interest in Milton deepened every week, till he seemed to charge himself with the vindication of Milton's character against all aspersions, and its interpretation to a critical public. When it passed round Kildrummie fair that that guileless man had landed a cow on Mary Robertson at a high price, which was fair to look upon, but had a fixed objection to

giving milk, Jamie declared it was an invention of the enemy, and assured Milton of his unshaken confidence in the presence of seven solemnised neighbours.

"Some ill-set wratches," he apologised to Milton, "canna bear the sicht o' a raelly gude man, an' are aye gettin' up stories aboot him. Tae think ye wud cheat a puir wumman aboot a coo."

"We maun juist bear reproach," began Milton, with his best accent.

"Na, na, a' said tae them," and Jamie refused to listen, "ye needna tell me ony sic stories. Milton is no an ordinary professor, an' he kens his Bible. Div ye think he 's forgotten the passage aboot robbin' the widow?"

"Ye 're makin' a mistak——"

"Ma verra words, Milton. 'It's been a mistak,' a' said, 'an' the meenut he finds it oot, Milton 'ill gie back the money. What richt hae ye tae consider him little better than a twa-faced heepocrite?'"

"There 's no a man in the Glen wud hae got Mary's notes back frae Milton but yersel, Jamie," said Drumsheugh, celebrating the achievement in the kirkyard next Sabbath. "There 's a michty poor in a nippy tongue."

Milton lost his second wife shortly after he came to the Glen, and it fell to Jamie to explain the widower's feelings to the fathers.

"'It 's a sair dispensation,' he said tae me, 'an' comes heavy when the calves are young; but we maunna complain. There 's aye mercy mingled wi' judgment. She micht hae been taken afore she hed got the hoose in order.

"'A 'm houpin' for the best, an' a' think the root o' the maitter wes in her; there wes times a' wud hae liked tae hear a clearer testimony, but we hevna a' the same gifts, an' there 's nae doot she wes savin' wi' the gear.

"'She expressed hersel as thankfu' for oor merridge, an' considered it a priveelege; but ma first wes mair experienced in doctrine, and hed a gift o' prayer, though fractious in temper at a time. Ye canna get a'thing, ye ken.'

"He hes a photograph o' the laist ane abune the fireplace in a frame wi' an inscription, an' he wipit his eyes an' says, 'We maun look up, ma freend, an' be resigned; it 's an awfu' job tae ideelize the creature.'

"'Ye 'ill no dae weel withoot a wife here, Milton,' says I; 'hoosekeepers are dear, an' ye 'ill never get the wark o' yir wife oot of

ane; it wes maybe a peety ye lat her trachle (fatigue) hersel when she wesna strong, but gin a man be busy wi' speeritual affairs he disna notice,' an' a' askit him if he wes thinkin' o' a third."

"Did ye dae that, Jamie?" said Hillocks, "an' her no gane a month. Milton 'ill think us a gey hard-hearted set in Drumtochty," and the fathers looked as if Jamie had gone too far.

"He 's no hed ony time tae think o 't yet," continued Jamie, quietly, "an' is tae leave himsel in the hands o' Providence. 'I 'll be guidit, nae doot, an' a' maun juist wait.' His langidge wes beautiful tae hear. 'Half the rent o' Milton 'ill need tae come oot the dairy, but we maun mairry in the Lord.' He wes sair affeckit a' left, and speakin' aboot 'Mama.' A' gie him sax months masel."

"Yir tongue got the better o' ye that day, a' doot, Jamie," and Hillocks, who had married twice with fair pecuniary success, was distinctly nettled. "What 's a man tae dae withoot a wife tae haud things in aboot an' see tae the hens? Forbye, bein' company," throwing in a sentimental consideration.

"Gin a man wants a woman tae gither eggs

an' sew buttons on his sark (shirt), he micht mairry twal times rinnin', an' naebody need say a word. But what richt hes sic a man tae speak o' wife or . . . luve? He 's juist a poleegamist."

"Lord's sake," ejaculated Hillocks, and the kirkyaird felt that this was very wild talk indeed, and even personal.

"Naethin' else," and Jamie's voice vibrated with a new note. "Gin a man gaes afore his family tae America tae mak a hame for them, an' leaves his wife here for a whilie, is he no mairrit? Wud he mairry another wife oot there tae keep his hoose, an' say he hed juist ae wife because the sea wes rollin' atween the twa women?"

"He daurna," replied Whinnie, who never saw six inches ahead; "the polis——" But Drumsheugh waved him to silence.

"Weel, gin the woman leaves the man an' passes intae the ither warld, is she deid, think ye, neeburs, an' is she no' his wife? An' mair nor that, are the twa no' nearer than ever, an' . . . dearer?

"Ye 'ill be sayin' in yir hearts, it 's no for Jamie Soutar tae be speakin' like this, him at 's

been alane a' his days; but a've ma ain thochts, an' the deepest thing, ay, and the bonniest, in the warld is a man an' a wumman ane in luve for ever."

Jamie turned round and went into the kirk hurriedly, but Drumsheugh lingered behind for a minute with Dr. Maclure, who was making his quarterly attendance.

"What think ye o' that, Weelum? It bore a wee hard on Hillocks, but it wes michty speakin' an' gared (made) the blood rin. Jamie 's a hard wratch ootside, but he's gude stuff inside."

"Did ye ever notice, Drum, that Jamie hes hed a black band on his Sabbath hat as far back as a' can mind? A' his freends are deid mair than thirty year syne. Wha 's it for, think ye? A 'm thinkin' naebody 'ill get tae the boddom o' Jamie till he fins oot the meanin' o' that band."

"Ye may be richt, Weelum, an' a 've wunnered tae, but Jamie 'ill never tell; he hes his ain secret, an' he 'ill keep it." The two men followed their neighbours, and Drumsheugh said to himself, "Puir Jamie; the auld story."

The kirkyard kept Jamie in exercise, but it was on one of our rare public occasions that he

made history, and two of his exploits are still subject of grateful recollection, and a bond between Drumtochty men in foreign parts. One was the vote of thanks to the temperance lecturer who had come, with the best intentions, to reform the Glen, and who, with the confidence of a youthful Southern and a variable hold of the letter aitch, used great freedom of speech. He instructed us all, from Doctor Davidson in the chair down to the smith, whom he described as "an intelligent hartisan," and concluded with a pointed appeal to Domsie to mend his ways and start a Band of Hope in the school.

"Solomon says, 'Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will never depart from it;' and I 'll apply these words to the Glen of Drumtochty, 'Train hup a child to 'ate the bottle, and when he is old he 'ill never depart from it;'" and the lecturer sat down in a silence that might be heard.

There was something approaching a rustle when Jamie rose to propose the vote of thanks —several charging themselves with snuff in haste, that a word might not be lost—and no one was disappointed.

"Doctor Davidson an' neeburs," said Jamie,

"it wudna be richt that this young gentleman sud come sae far o' his ain accord and give us sic a faithfu' address withoot oor thanks, although he 'ill excuse us puir country fouk for no bein' able to speak his beautiful English.

"We a' admired his ingenious application o' Proverbs, an' he may be sure that nane o' us 'ill forget that new Proverb as lang as we live; a' micht say that it 'ill be a household word in the Glen.

"Gin it 's no presumption tae say it, it 's verra interestin' tae see hoo much experience the lecturer hes for his years in the up bringing o' bairns, and a' mak nae doot the learned bodies in the Glen, as well as the parents, 'ill lay his words tae heart.

"There wes a man in a glen north-bye," modestly offering an anecdote for the lecturer's future use, "'at wes sober (ill), an' the doctor, wha wes a verra ignorant man, said he wud need a small tastin' tae keep up his strength. But the man wes of the lecturer's persuasion, and wud drink nothing but water. The weather wes terrible cold, and one day, juist five minutes aifter he hed his mornin' gless of water, the

man died. When they opened him it wes found that he hed frozen up inch by inch, and the laist gless had juist turned tae ice in his throat. It wes sic a noble instance o' conscientious adherence tae principle that a' thocht a' wud mention it for the lecturer's encouragement." And when Jamie sat down the audience were looking before them with an immovable countenance, and the doctor held out his silver snuff box to Jamie afterwards with marked consideration.

It is, however, generally agreed that Jamie's most felicitous stroke was his guileless response to the humiliating invitation of a lay preacher, who had secured the use of the Free Kirk, and held a meeting under Milton's auspices.

"Now, my dear friends," said the good man, a half-pay Indian Colonel, with a suspicion of sunstroke, "all who wish to go to heaven stand up," and Drumtochty rose in a solid mass, except Lachlan Campbell, who considered the preacher ignorant of the very elements of doctrine, and Jamie, who was making a study of Milton with great enjoyment.

Much cheered by this earnest spirit, the Colonel then asked any Drumtochty man (or

woman) who wished to go elsewhere to declare himself after the same fashion.

No one moved for the space of thirty seconds, and the preacher was about to fall back on general exhortation, when Jamie rose in his place and stood with great composure.

"You surely did not understand what I said, my aged friend."

Jamie indicated that he had thoroughly grasped the Colonel's meaning.

"Do you really mean that you are ready to . . . go . . . where I mentioned?"

"A 'm no anxious for sic a road," said Jamie, blandly, "but a' cudna bear tae see ye stannin' alane, and you a stranger in the pairish," and Drumtochty, which had been taken unawares and was already repenting a weak concession, went home satisfied.

Hillocks was so drawn to Jamie after this incident that he forgave him his wild views on marriage, and afforded him an opportunity of explaining his hat-band.

"Ye 're a body, Jamie," he said in vague compliment, "an' every man hes his ain wys; but hoo is 't that ye aye hae a band on yir hat?"

"What think ye yersel?" and Jamie eyed Hillocks with a gleam of humour.

"As sure 's deith, Jamie, a' canna guess, unless it be a notion."

"Toots, man, a' thocht ye wud hae been sure tae jalouse the truth o' a' the fouk in the Glen; div ye no ken that a band hides the grease an' maks a hat laist twice as lang?"

"Is that a'?" said Hillocks; "juist economy?"

"Ye hae the word," answered Jamie, with unblushing face. "That band 's savit me the price o' twa new hats in forty year."

It was on the way home from kirk, and after Hillocks had turned into his own road Jamie took off his hat and brushed the band with a reverent hand.

II

A CYNIC'S END

WHEN Jamie "slippit awa'' and the kirkyard met to pass judgment, it was agreed that he had been a thorough-going imposter and had quite befooled the outer world, but that he had never taken in the Glen.

"It cowed a' tae hear Kildrummie lecturin' on Jamie in the third laist Friday,'' said Drumsheugh, with immense contempt; "ye sud hae been there, Hillocks; a' never heard as muckle doonricht nonsense atween the Junction an' the station in forty year. Man, gin Jamie hed juist been in the train himsel, he wud hae been terrible pleased.

"'He 's awa noo,' says that juitlin' (tricky) twa-faced body Sandie Mackay, that gied Jamie licht wecht wi' his coal, 'an' it 's oor duty tae be charitable, but a 've ma doots aboot him. His tongue wes nae scannal, an' he wes aye maist veecious against speeritual releegion.' "

"What said ye, Drumsheugh?" inquired Hillocks, with keen expectation.

"Naethin' worth mentionin'; it's no easy pittin' sense intae a Kildrummie man. 'Ye're wrang aboot Jamie miscain' gude men, Sandie, for he wes awfu' taen (taken) up wi' Milton; he coonted him a straichforrit, honourable man, wha wudna gie licht wecht or tak advantage o' a neebur.'"

"Ye hed him there; he wud lat Jamie alane aifter that, a'm expeckin'."

"'It's a feedin' storm an' no lichtsome for the sheep,' wes a' he said.

"Na, na, Sandie needna speak tae a Drumtochty man aboot Jamie; he didna live here a' his days withoot oor kennin' him. There's nae doot he hed a tongue, but it wes aye on the richt side.

"Div ye mind hoo he yokit on the kirkyaird ae day for lauchin' at Airchie Moncur an' his teatotalism? it took us a' oor time tae quiet him, he wes that croose; and ye ken it wes Jamie that focht awa wi' Posty till the morning he wes drooned. He got him doon tae twa gless a day, an' micht hae reformed him athegither gin he hedna been interrupit.

"His hert wes juist ower big, that wes the maitter wi' Jamie, an' he hoddit (hid) his feelings for fear o' makin' a fule o' himsel afore the pairish.

"Sall, he wesna verra parteeklar what he said gin ye hed him in a corner. He nursit the bit lassie that lived wi' Mary Robertson for a hale day when she wes deein' o' diptheria, an' threipit tae me that he hed juist gi'en a cry in passin', an' when Lily Grant deed in London, he gied oot that her mistress hed paid for bringin' the corpse tae Drumtochty kirkyaird. He cud lee near as weel as Milton, but it wes aye tae cover his ain gudeness.

"A' coontit Weelum Maclure an' Jamie Soutar the warmest herts in the Glen, an' Jamie's never been the same sin . . . we lost Weelum. The kirkyaird's no worth comin' tae noo that Jamie's awa."

It spoke volumes for Milton's zeal that he was among the first to visit Jamie after he took to bed, and the Glen can never be sufficiently thankful that Elspeth Macfadyen was present to give an accurate account of the interview.

"'Whatna step is that at the door?' said Jamie; 'a' never herd it here afore'; and when

a' telt him it wes Milton, he gied me a luke an' briskit up that meenut.

"'Elspeth, he 's come tae dae me gude, an' he thinks he hes me in his hand; pit him in yon chair whar a' can keep ma een on him, for a' canna manage him oot o' ma sicht.'

"'It 's solemn tae see ye brocht sae low, Jam—Mister Soutar'; he thocht he micht try Jamie at laist, but the spunk gied oot o' him facin' Jamie. 'Thae strokes are sent for a wise end; they humble oor pride.'

"'It 's no a stroke,' said Jamie, lookin' fearsome at him frae ablow his nicht-cap, 'though a 'll no deny there micht be a titch o' rheumaticks. But a' coont lumbago mair subduin'; it taks ye sudden in the sma o' the back, an' 'ill keep ye in the bit for an 'oor.'

"'A' wes thinkin' o' the hert, no the body, ma freend,' an' Milton started on the whine; 'a 've been afflickit masel, an' dinna ken what a 'd been the day hed it no been for trials.'

"'Ye needna tell me, Milton, for a'body kens yir losses, but a' houp ye 'ill hae the present gude wife a whilie; is she yir third or fourth? for ma memory 's gaein' fast.'

"Milton said naethin' for a meenut, an' a'

daurna look at him, but Jamie's een were dancin' in his heid; he wes haein' his last bout wi' Milton, an' it wes meat an' drink tae him.

"'Wud ye like me tae read somethin'?' begins Milton again. 'A've a fine tract here, "A Sandy Foundation"; it's verra searchin' an' rousin',' an' he pits on his glesses.

"'Thank ye,' says Jamie, 'but thae tracts are ower deep for a simple man like masel; the Bible dis for me graund. A've a favourite passage; noo if ye didna mind readin''t, it wud be a comfort.

"'Turn tae the 23rd o' Matthew, an' it 'ill dae fine gin ye begin at the 13th verse, "Woe unto ye, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," an' as sure as a'm lookin' at ye, Drumsheugh, Jamie gared Milton feenish the chapter, an' ilka time heepocrites wud come he wud say tae himsel, 'Maist comfortin',' till a' hed tae gae ootside; he wes a veecious cratur, Jamie, when he hed an ill-wull tae a body.

"When a' cam in, Milton hed been wantin' tae pray, and Jamie wes layin' doon three condeetions.

"'First, ye maunna scriech (scream), for that wud gae through ma head; secondly,' just like

a sermon, 'ye 're no tae gang wanderin' aifter the Jews or ony orra fouk; and laist, there 's tae be naethin' personal, for a' wud coont that doonricht impidence.'

"'A 'm astonished at ye,' says Milton; 'hoo cud ye expect a blessin' on sic a prayer?' an' he rises tae leave. 'Ye 're sure there 's naethin' on yir mind, for a 've hed experience.'

"'Weel, Milton, noo that ye 've mentioned 't, there is a maitter tribblin' me, but it 's no every man a' cud trust, an' a' dinna want tae burden ye.'

"'Is 't a sin o' omission or commission?' an' Milton wes as keen as a ferret. Puir cratur, little he kent Jamie.

"'Curious tae say, it 's baith; it 's maist extraordinar' hoo near ye 've come tae 't; hoo cud ye ken?'

"'We 're a' frail, Mister Soutar,' an' Milton lookit as if butter cudna melt in his mooth; 'ye michtna think it, but a 've been tempit masel—lang syne, of coorse; baith, omission an' commission, did ye say? that 's no sae common."

"'Na, it taks an accompleeshed sinner tae manage baith at the same time, an' a 'll tell ye the case,' an' a' saw something wes comin'.

"'Ye ken Sandie Mackay, wha sells coals at Kildrummie station on week-day and preaches roond the country on Sabbaths. Drumsheugh's Saunders brocht up ma laist load frae Sandie; "half a ton best burning coal" wes on the paper, an' wud ye believe me, a hundredwecht short measure, an' half o' them third quality—omission an' commission.

"'A' can see ye 're scandalised, for a' mind noo, ye 've been acquant wi' Sandie in meetings; noo, Milton, a' wes calc'latin' that a 've lost sax and twopence exactly, and gin ye cud get it oot o' the waefu' wratch, this week, a 'd sough awa easier.' Milton made aff withoot anither word, an' the bed shook ablow Jamie."

The afflicted patient was sitting up in bed when Doctor Davidson came in, and would have concealed his occupation had it been possible to get a large paper kite out of sight.

"It 's for Saunders's laddie at Drumsheugh," he apologised; "he 's ane o' the maist impident an' mischievous smatchits (little fellow) in the Glen. If a' didna help him wi' his bit trokes there wudna be a floor left in ma gairden; the bairns are juist the trachle o' ma life."

"Quite so, Jamie; and of all the people in the Glen there's nobody you like so well and none that love you more. The more you scold them, the more they come to you. As for the women, you've been criticising them for a generation, and now they're all fighting for the honour of nursing you."

"Havers," responded Jamie, "it's juist tae get a sicht o' the inside o' a weel-kept hoose, and tak a lesson in order, though a'll no deny that Elspeth Macfadyen an' auld Mary hev been verra attentive, as weel as Bell Baxter an' Annie Mitchell."

"It's just a pity, Jamie, that so good-hearted a man never had a woman of his own. What set you against marriage?"

"Wha sed a' wes against merridge, Doctor Davidson?" and Jamie's face flushed. "Did ever man or woman hear me speak lichtly o' the mystery o' luve? The Glen hes thocht me an auld cankered bachelor, an' a've seen a lass leave her lad's side on the sicht o' me. Little they kent!"

No man knew better than the minister when to be quiet, and the ticking of Jamie's big silver watch was heard throughout the kitchen.

"Doctor Davidson, ye 've been an honest man in the pulpit an' oot o 't a' thae years, an' yir warks hev aye gane afore yir words. A 'll tell ye ma secret afore a' dee; ou ay, a' ken a 'm deein', an' a 'm rael pleased.

"Ye 'ill no mind that forty-five year syne a' workit a hale winter near Kildrummie, gaein' and comin' nicht an' mornin'.

"A' met . . . a lassie there, an' a' cam tae luve her aince an' for ever. No that a' wud hae spoken tae her, for a 've been an ill-made, ill-tempered, thrawn body a' ma days, an' she . . . she wes as gude as Marget Hoo, though different. What mair can man say?

"The day ma wark wes dune a' said gude-bye tae her, an' that micht hae been the end, but a' turned sudden, an' a' saw the luke on her face.

"She cud hae taen her pick o' a' the lads roond Kildrummie, but nae man can lay doon the law tae luve; she . . . tuke me, that hed naething but a faithfu' hert, an' we gied oor word ane tae the ither for life . . . an' deith, as a man an' wuman sud aifter Christ's comin'.

"We cudna be mairrit till the summer, an' we agreed tae write nae letters tae set the

fouks' tongues gaein; we wantit tae hae oor ain secret.

"So we trysted tae meet aince a week at a stile in the woods atween here an' Kildrummie, an' we hed . . . seeven evenings thegither; that wes a' we ever saw o' ane anither in this warld.

"It wes the month o' May in an early spring that year, and the leaves were oot in their bonnie first green, an' the birds were busy wi' their nests, an' the lambs were still wi' their mithers in the field. A' nature wes glad wi' us, an' blessed oor luve.

"The gate hes fa'en tae pieces lang syne, and the gap 's built up wi' a dyke, an' the trees are cut doon an' the hawthorn rooted up, but it 's . . . the same place tae me.

"A' can see the tree where we sat, an' the primroses at oor feet, an' the sun shinin' on her face, an' the look in her eyes; a' see her wavin' her hand tae me on the road aifter we pairted, an' the glint o' her goon through the firs the last nicht.

"When a' cam the next day she wesna there, an' a' hoddit amang the trees for a ploy, but it wes lang waitin', for she didna come, an' a' gied hame wi' fear in ma hert.

"It micht be that she cudna get awa, a' said tae masel as a' worked at a dyke, but the dread wes hangin' ower me, an' when there wes naebody at the stile the next nicht, a' cud bide nae langer.

"A' set aff tae her hoose, and ilka turn o' the road a' lookit for Menie. Aince ma hert loupit in ma briest like a birdie in its cage, for a wumman cam along the near road frae Kildrummie, but it wesna Menie.

"When a' saw her brither wi' his face tae Drumtochty a' kent, afore he said a word, that he wes seekin' me, an' that Menie wes dead. Never a tear cam that day tae ma een, an' he telt me, stannin' in the middle o' the road where it begins tae gae doon the hill.

"'It wes her throat, an' the doctor wes feared frae the first day; the nicht she didna come she wes carried (delirious); she . . . said "Jamie, Jamie," ower an' ower again, an' wanted tae rise.

"'Aboot daybreak she cam tae hersel, and knew oor faces. "A'm deein'," she said, "an' a' didna keep ma tryst last nicht. It's ower late noo, an' a'll no see him on earth again.

"'"Tell James Soutar that it wesna ma blame a' failed, an' gie him ma Bible," an' â while aifter she said, "A 'll keep the tryst wi' him some day," an' . . . that 's a'.'

"Her brither gied me the book an' waited, expeckin' me tae say somethin', but a' hed nae words, an' he left me on the road, coontin' me hard o' hert; a' wes a' that nicht . . . at the stile.

"Doctor, wull ye obleege me by gaein' tae that cupboard and bringin' me ma Sabbath hat?"

Jamie took off the ring of crape, thin and faded with the years, and held it for a moment in his hand.

"Pit it in the fire, doctor, whar a' can see it burn; a 've worn it forty-four years laist spring, but a 'll no need it again, for a 'm gaein' oot o' mournin' sune.

"Here 's her Bible," and Jamie brought it from a shelf in his box bed; "gin ye come tae ma chestin' (coffining), wull ye see it be pit in? There 's naethin' else a' want tae cairry wi' me tae the ither side, an' . . . a 'll juist bid ye gude-bye, doctor; ye 're an honest man ootside an' in."

"Would you like . . ." said the doctor, evidently moved.

"A' wud be obleeged," and Jamie took off his night-cap.

Doctor Davidson prayed:

"Heavenly Father, who only art the source of love and the giver of every good gift, we thank Thee for the love wherewith the soul of Thy servant clave unto this woman as Jacob unto Rachel, which many years have not quenched. Remember the faithfulness of this true heart, and disappoint not its expectation. May the tryst that was broken on earth be kept in heaven, and be pleased to give Thy . . . give Jamie a good home-coming. Amen."

"Thank ye, doctor; ye 've said what I wantit, an' . . . it wes kind o' ye tae pit in Jamie," and his hand came out from the bed for a last grasp. He watched the minister go, and when Elspeth returned he said, "Yon 's a richt man."

The upland children returning home from school in the afternoon came to the cottage door, and Jamie, who had been dozing, heard their whispering.

"There 's some o' thae prodigals oot there in

the gairden ; bring them in, Elspeth, or a' give them a hearin' ; they 've juist been the torment o' ma life."

They came in warily, as those who had some experience of former tricks, but there was no fear even among the girls. Had it not been known how Jamie detested children, you would have imagined that he had been their playmate.

"The warst laddie o' the lot," and Jamie seemed to be speaking to the ceiling of his bed, "is Tammie Baxter. It 's maist aggravatin' that he sud leave a lairge paper kite in a sick body's bed, an' me wantin' tae turn roond."

The kite projected itself forward from dark recesses in all its glory of many and very loud colours.

"It 's rael bonnie," was all that Tammie offered by way of thanks, as he took possession of his prize amid general envy.

"A' wudna say but there micht be sugar-candy in the cupboard," continued Jamie in a soliloquy, and a rush for the door was stayed.

"Annie Mitchell 'ill divide it fair, an' a 'm expeckin' a kiss."

"Are ye near weel?" she said, when the debt

was paid after a generous fashion. "Mither wants tae ken."

"Tell her a 'm juist gettin' on fine, an' a 'll be a' richt in twa or three days."

Elspeth reported the proceedings with the kite, and Jamie was full of anxiety.

"Tell Tammie tae pit on a heavier clod and keep tuggin'," till a shout came in through the door.

"It 's near oot o' sicht," and then Jamie was at peace.

"Bairns are an' awfu' trachle (trouble)," he moralised; "a' canna mak oot hoo fouk pit up wi' them; that lassie Mitchell is juist a hempie."

Next morning Jamie declined conversation, and lay to all appearance unconscious, so that when the Free Kirk minister came, between whom and Jamie there had been a special friendship since the day Carmichael had declared his conviction on Posty's future state, Elspeth led him in on tip-toe and spoke in a whisper.

"Ou aye, a' kent ye wud be concerned, for you an' he were chief (friendly); he 's been this wy a' day, naither better nor worse; juist leevin" that 's a'; he 'ill never speak again."

"I have been at the Glasgow sacrament," and Carmichael went over to the fire-place; "else I would have come up before. Jamie has always been very kind to me. It 's sad to see him lying there speechless, who had the cleverest tongue in the Glen."

"Ay, ay, he 's past speech noo; he hears naething."

"Wes 't a vawcancy ye were preachin' in," a loud, clear voice proceeded from the bed, "or juist helpin' a freend?"

"Preserve 's a' body an' soul," cried Elspeth; and Carmichael himself was shaken.

"We thought you were unconscious, Jamie; I 'm glad you can still take an interest in things."

"There 's been a gey lot o' havers (nonsense) gaein' in this hoose the laist twal 'oors, but a' didna let on; na, na, a' enjoyed it."

Kirsty Stewart came to share the night watch with Elspeth, but neither presumed till nearly daybreak, when Kirsty declared, with the just weight of her medical authority, that all was over.

"He hes the look, an' his hands are as cold as ice; feel his feet, wumman."

"A' canna find them," said Elspeth, making timid explorations.

"They used tae be on the end o' ma legs," remarked Jamie, as if uncertain where they might now be placed.

Elspeth started back and looked at him, but his eyes were closed, and he gave no other sign of consciousness.

"A 'll no meddle wi' him again," said Elspeth, solemnly, "though a' sit here for a week; he 's a queer body, Jamie; he gied his ain wy a' his life, an' tak ma word for 't, Kirsty, he 'ill hae his ain wy o' deein'."

When the first ray shot through the window and trembled on the bed, Jamie raised himself and listened. He shaded his eyes with his hand, as if he were watching for some one and could not see clearly for excess of light.

"Menie," he cried suddenly, with a new voice, "a 've keepit oor tryst."

When they laid him in the coffin—the Bible in his hands—the smile was still on his face, and he appeared a man some forty years of age.

A SERVANT LASS

I

HOW SHE WENT OUT

MARY ROBERTSON'S brave fight to bring up her orphaned grandchildren had won her the silent respect of the Glen, and when it was reported that Lily had obtained a place in London, and would leave in three weeks, the fathers gave themselves to the incident on all its sides.

"Nae wumman in the pairish hes dune her duty better than Mary," said Drumsheugh, with authority. "She 's been an example tae every man o 's. It 's auchteen year laist Martinmas sin' her dochter's man ran aff and his puir wife came hame tae dee, leavin' her mother wi' the chairge o' sax young bairns.

"'Ye canna dae 't withoot help, Mary,' says I tae her: 'ye 'ill need a bit allooance frae the pairish, an' a 'll get it for ye next Boord. A shilling a week ilka bairn 'ill gang a lang wy in yir hands.'

"'Thank ye, Drumsheugh.' She wes standing

at her gate, and drew herself up straicht. 'An' a' the neeburs hev been freendly; but there 's never been ane o' ma bluid on the pairish, an' there never wull be sae lang as the Almichty leaves me ma reason and twa airms.

"'Mary had a puir life o't, an' she deed o' the disgrace her man pit on her. "A 'm gaein' awa," she said tae me, "an' a 've juist ae thing tae ask, mither; dinna lat the bairns gae on the pairish; bring them up tae wark and tae respeck themsels." A' gied her ma word, an' a 'll keep it.' She lookit graund, fouks," wound up Drumsheugh.

"She 's rael Drumtochty, is Mary," remarked Jamie Soutar; "for doonricht pride an' thraunness ye 'ill no get their marra in Scotland. What for did she no tak the allooance? She wud hae been a gude few notes the better a' thae years: mony an 'oor's wark she micht hae spared hersel'.

"Noo gin Mary hed been a wumman wi' a proper speerit o' humility and kent her place, she wud hae gruppit a' she cud get, and beggit frae the neeburs, an' gotten on better than ever. But if she didna sit up at nicht makin' the bairns' claithes, and wark in the fields a' day tae earn

their schuling, an' a' tae keep her independence, as they ca't. A 've seen Mary come intae kirk wi' the sax bairns afore her, an' she cudna hae cairried her head higher hed she been the Coontess o' Kilspindie.

"A 'm judgin' this kind o' speerit 's in the verra air o' the Glen, for there 's juist twa auld weemen on the pairish; ane o' them 's blind, the ither 's had a stroke; naither o' them hes a freend, an' baith o' them murn every day they canna wark."

"Mary 's an able wumman," broke in Hillocks, who was much given to practical detail; "a 've seen her hens layin' in the dead o' winter, and she ned a coo, a' mind, 'at gied half as muckle milk again as ony coo in oor toon. As for plannin', she got ma Sunday blacks when they were gey far through wi 't, an' gin she didna juist mak a jacket for Chairlie 'at did him for ten year; a 'm dootin' she hes tae pay for him yet: he 's no the help he micht hae been as far as a' can mak oot; eh, Drumsheugh?"

"Gin it wesna for him daein' naethin' and livin' on his faimily, Hillocks, Lily micht stay wi' her grannie, an' keep Mary comfortable in her auld age. But they aye cover him, baith

his grannie and his sister, till ye wud think there wes never a better-daein' lad gied oot o' the Glen. Whatever they say among themsels, they 'ill no say a word ootside."

What they did say in Mary Robertson's cottage that evening was sad enough.

"Weel, weel, lassie, there wes sax tae begin wi', an' twa died o' the dipthery—eh, but Doctor Maclure wes kind that time—and twa mairried and gied awa, an' Chairlie . . . in Ameriky, an' there 's juist yersel left, and I wes trustin' ye wud stay wi' yir auld grannie an' close her een."

"Dinna speak that foolish wy, grannie," but Lily's voice had a break in it. "Ye 're lookin' fresher than mony a young wumman, an' ye ken a 'm tae get hame at a time, maybe ilka three year."

"It 's a lang road, Lily, tae Lunnon, an' ill tae traivel; a' may be dead and buried afore ye come back, an' a 'll be terrible lonely, juist like a bird when the young anes are ta'en awa."

"Gin ye say anither word a 'll fling up ma place, an' never gang intae service ava; it 's no ma wush tae leave the Glen an' gang sae far frae hame. But we maun py the man in Muir-

town what Chairlie borrowed, else oor name 'ill be disgraced."

"It 's disgraced eneuch already with sic a useless fellow; he 's his faither ower again—a fair face, a weel-dressed back, a cunning tongue, an' a fause heart. There 's no a drop o' Robertson bluid in him, lassie; there 's times a' wish he was dead," and Mary's voice trembled with passion.

"Wisht, wisht, grannie; he 's mither's only son, an' she wes prood o' him, a 've heard ye say, an' he 'ill maybe mend; div ye ken a' wes juist imaginin' that he set tae work and githered a lot o' siller, an' paid back a' ye hae dune for him.

"Ye 'ill no be angry, but a' telt Marget Hoo ae day aboot oor tribble an' ma houp o' Chairlie—for ye canna look at Marget an' no want tae unburden yersel—an' she said, 'Dinna be ashamed o' yir dreams, Lily; they 'ill a' come true some day, for we canna think better than God wull dae.'"

"Marget Hoo is nearer the heart o' things than onybody in the Glen, an' a 'm prayin' she may be richt. Get the bukes; it 's time for oor readin'." And Mary asked that "the heart o'

him that wes far awa micht be turned tae gudeness, an' that he micht be a kind brother to his sister."

No girl had gone to service in London before, and the Glen took a general interest in Lily's outfit. The wricht made her kist of sound, well-seasoned wood, and the Glen, looking in from time to time, highly approved of its strength and security. Sandie was particularly proud of an inner compartment which he had contrived with much ingenuity, and which was secured by a padlock whose key defied imitation.

"Noo, you see, if ony ill-conditioned wratch got intae the kist, he micht get a goon or a jaicket, but he wudna be able tae titch her siller. Na, na, what she wins she keeps; ma certes, that boxie 'ill beat them."

"Ye ken what ye 're aboot, wricht," said Hillocks, who felt that one going to distant parts could hardly take too many precautions, "an' ye 've turned oot a wise-like kist; sall, Lily, 'ill dae weel gin she fill it."

Concerning the filling long and anxious consultations were held in Mary's kitchen, and Elspeth Macfadyen was called in as a specialist,

because she had been once in service herself, and because her sister was cook in the house of the Provost of Muirtown.

"We maunna gang a saxpence intae debt," and Mary laid down preliminary conditions, "an' a'thing sud be genuine, in an' oot—nae show on the back and poverty ablow; that 's puir cleidin' (clothing) for Christian fouk."

"Lily 's savit aucht pund at the Lodge, an' a' can spare twa or three. How mony dresses an' sic-like 'ill she need tae begin respectable, for the hoose an' the kirk?'

"Lily 'ill need twa prints for certain, an' ae black dress for the house, an' anither dress for gaein' oot tae kirk or tae see her freends. She wud be better o' a third print an' a second oot-side goon—for a bit change, ye ken. Then she maun hae a bonnet for Sabbath an' a hat tae gae oot a message in forby. The ither things she 'ill hae already," for Elspeth had been going over the matter carefully for weeks; "ye 'ill be getting her things at Muirtown, an' a 'll be gled to gie ye ony help in ma poor."

Three hours did they spend next Friday in the Muirtown shop, examining, selecting, calculating, till Lily's humble outfit was complete

and Elspeth's full list overtaken, save the third print and a merino gown on which Mary had set her heart.

"We haena the means," and Mary went over the figures again on her fingers, "an' sae ye maun juist wait. Gin the price o' butter keeps up, ye 'ill hae them afore the New Year, an' a 'll send them up in a bit parcel. . . . Havers, what sud a' stairve masel for? nae fear o' that; but keep 's a, what 's Drumsheugh aifter here?"

"Hoo are ye a' the day?" said the great man, fresh from a victory over a horse-dealer, in which he had wrested a price beyond the highest expectation of Drumtochty; "can ye gie me a hand wi' twa or three bit trokes, Elspeth?" and the two disappeared into the recesses of the shop.

"A' heard ye were here, an' a' wes wonderin' hoo the siller wes haudin' oot; naebody daur offer half-a-croon tae Mary; but she michtna mind Lily gettin' a bit present frae a neebur, juist tae hansel her new kist, ye ken," and Drumsheugh pressed two notes into Elspeth's hands, and escaped from the strange place by a side door. When the parcel was opened that

evening, for the joy of going over its contents, Mary turned on Elspeth in fierce wrath.

"What did ye dae this for, Elspeth Macfadyen? an' behind ma back. Ye ken a' didna pay for thae twa, and that a 'll no tak an ounce o' tea let alane twa goons withoot payment. Pit the goons up, Lily, an' a 'll gie them back the mornin', though a' hae tae walk the hale twal mile tae Muirtown."

"Dinna be sae hysty, Mary." Elspeth was provokingly calm. "Ye needna be feared that Drumsheugh didna pay for his order, and if he wanted tae gie the lassie a fairin', a' see nae use in flinging it back in his face; but ye maunna lat on tae himsel for the warld, or tell a livin' soul."

When Lily's box was packed on Thursday evening, her grandmother would have slipped in all the household treasures that could be introduced between layers of soft goods, and sent the eight-day clock had it been a suitable equipment for a young woman entering service in London. The box was taken down to Kildrummie station in one of Drumsheugh's carts, padded round with straw lest the paint be scratched, but Hillocks came with his dog-cart

and drove Lily down in state, carrying in her right hand a bunch of flowers from Jamie Soutar's garden, and in the other a basket containing a comb of honey left by Posty, without remark, a dozen eggs from Burnbrae, and two pounds of perfect butter from Mary's hand. These were intended as a friendly offering from the Glen to Lily's new household that she might not appear empty-handed, but the peppermints that filled her pocket were for herself, and the white milk-scones on the top of the bag, with a bottle of milk, were to sustain Lily on the long journey. Mary shook hands with Lily twice, once at the cottage door and again after she had taken her place beside Hillocks, but Mary did not kiss Lily, for whom she would have died, and whom she did not expect to see again in this life; nor were their farewell words affecting.

"See that ye hae yir box richt libelled, Lily, an' ye 'ill need tae watch it at the junctions; keep the basket wi' the eggs in yir hands, for fear somebody sits on 't; an', Lily, wumman, for ony sake haud yir goon aff the wheel when ye 're gettin' doon at Kildrummie. Is 't comin' tae a shoor, Hillocks?"

"A' wudna say but there micht be a scowie afore nicht; it 'ill freshen the neeps fine." And so Lily departed.

"But Mary went to a knowe that commanded the road, and watched Hillocks's dogcart cross Tochty bridge and go up the other side till it disappeared into the dark fir woods on the ridge. Then she went back to the kitchen, where everything spoke of her girl, and sat down by the lonely fireside and wept.

It was a curious coincidence that Jamie Soutar had some "troke" in Muirtown that day, and travelled in the same carriage with Lily, beguiling her from sorrow with quaint stories and indirect shrewd advice. As he was rather early for his business, he had nothing better to do than see Lily off by the London express, adding to her commissariat a package of sweets from the refreshment room, and an illustrated paper from the bookstall. He shambled along beside her carriage to the extreme edge of the platform, and the last thing Lily Grant saw as she went forth into a strange land was Jamie waving his hand. It showed that the old man's memory was beginning to fail that, instead of going down to the town, he went back

by the midday train to Kildrummie, giving Mary a cry in the evening, and assuring her that Lily was so far on her journey in "graund heart."

It was covenanted between them that Lily should send Mary a "scrape o' the pen" on arrival—as an assurance that she was safe, and the eggs—and should write in a while at full length, when she had settled down to her work and found a kirk. The Glen waited for this letter with expectation, and regarded it as common property, so that when Posty delivered it to Mary he sat down without invitation, and indicated that he was ready to receive any titbits she might offer for his use.

"Lily's keepin' her health, but she's no awfu' ta'en up wi' the climate o' London; wud ye believe it, they hae the gas lichtit by two o'clock in the aifternoon, an' the fog's eneuch tae smoor ye; it's no veecious cauld though."

"There's waur things than cauld," said Posty, who had started that morning in twenty degrees of frost; "is she wearyin'?"

"Whiles a'm dootin', puir lassie; when she hes half an 'oor tae hersel, she gaes up tae her room and taks oot a pokie (bag) o' rose

leaves we dried in the simmer. The smell o' them brings up oor bit gairden and me stannin', as plain as day, at the door. Fouk tak notions, a've heard, when they're far frae hame," added Mary, by way of apology.

"Ay, ay," and Posty looked steadily from him.

"It's eatin' an' drinkin' frae mornin' till nicht, Lily says; an' the verra servants hae meat three times a day, wi' beer tae their dinner. An' the wyste cowes a'; she says Elspeth Macfadyen wud get her livin' frae amang their feet."

"A' dinna think muckle o' beer," observed Posty; "there's nae fusion in't; naither heat for the stamach nor shairpness for the intelleck."

"A set o' extravagant hizzies," continued Mary; "fur on their jaickets, like leddies, an' no a penny in the bank. The meenut they get their wages, aff tae spend them on finery. Ane o' them borrowed five shillings frae Lily tae get her boots soled."

"Lord's sake, that's no cannie," and Posty awoke to the dangers that beset a young girl's path in the great Babylon; "tell Lily, what-

ever she dis, tae keep her haud o' her siller."

"Ye 're richt there, Posty. Lily 's juist ower saft-hearted, and she hes a gey lot o' trimmies tae deal wi'. Wud ye credit it, ilka ane o' them hes 'Miss' on her letters, an' gin freends come tae see them they maun ask for Miss this an' that; a' pit 'Lily Grant, Hoosemaid,' on ma letters."

"Ye 're wrang there, Mary," interrupted Posty; "what for sud ye ca' doon yir ain, an' her sic a fine lassie? Ma opeenion is that a Drumtochty wumman hes as gude a richt tae Miss as her neeburs. Sall, gin a' catch ye sendin' aff anither 'Lily,' a 'll whup in the Miss masel; but is there nae word aboot the kirks?" for Posty felt that these trifling details were keeping them from the heart of the matter.

"A 'm comin' tae that, an' it 's worth hearin', for the ignorance o' thae London fouk is by ordinar. When she askit the near road tae the kirk, naebody in the hoose cud tell her whether it wes east or wast."

Posty wagged his head in pity.

"So she gied oot and fell in wi' a polisman,

an' as luck wud hae it, he wes a Scotchman. 'Come awa, lassie,' he said; 'a' see whar ye 're frae; it 's a mercy ye didna fa' intae the hands o' some of ma neeburs; they micht hae sent ye aff tae the Methodies, an' they wud hae gien ye a fricht wi' cryin' Hallelujah.'"

"A graund body for a' that," interpolated Posty, "but clean astray on the decrees."

"'Yonder 's the place,' says he, 'an' ye pit yir collection in a plate at the door—there 's nae ladles—but there 's a couthie wumman keeps the door in the gallery, an' she 'ill gie ye a seat.'

"She kent it wes her ain place when she saw a properly ordained minister in the pulpit, wi' his black goon and bonnie white bands; and when they started the Hundredth Psalm, her heart cam intae her mooth, an' she cudna sing a word."

"Wes there an organ?" demanded Posty, with the manner of one who has a duty to perform, and must be on his guard against sentiment.

"A 'll no tell ye a lee, Posty, there wes, an' of coorse Lily didna like it, but she wes terrible pleased wi' the sermon. As for the organ,

it juist boomilled awa, an' she never lat on she heard it."

"Dis she gie the texts an' diveesions?" and Posty smacked his lips.

"It 's no likely she wud forget that, aifter gaein' ower them ilka Sabbath nicht here sin she wes a wee bairnie. 'Faith without works is dead,' James, ye ken."

"Ay, ay," cried Posty, impatiently; "a testin' text; ye cudna hae a better tae jidge a a man by; hoo wes 't handled?"

"Three heads. First, 'True religion is a principle in the soul'—Posty nodded, 'that 's faith.' Second, 'It is a practice in the life'—'warks,' murmured Posty. Third, 'Without a principle in the soul, there can't be a practice in the life.'"

"A' see naethin' wrang there, Mary; it 's maybe no verra oreeginal, but that 's naither here nor there; gin ye stand on yir head ye can aye see a new glen; it wis soond an' instructive. Did he titch on Paul and James? he wud be sure tae be reconcilin' them, gin he be ablow forty."

"That 's a' she writes on the sermon, but she gied intae the vestry wi' her lines, an' the

minister wes rael kind tae her when he heard her tongue.

"His English slippit aff in a meenut, an' oot cam the auld tongue; he's a Perthshire man himsel, though frae the sooth end, an' his wife's second cousin is merried tae the minister o' Kildrummie's brother, so ye micht say he wes conneckit wi' Drumtochty.

"He telt her tae coont him a freend noo that she wes amang strangers, an' tae send for him in tribble, an' Lily declares that she gaed back that mornin' wi' her heart fu' of comfort an' gledness. So ye may tell the neebors that Lily's daein' weel in London. She sends her respects tae Drumsheugh, and ye'ill say tae Jamie Soutar that Lily wes askin' for him."

When Posty departed, Mary read the last part of Lily's letter slowly to herself.

"The minister's prayer took in a' kinds o' fouk, an' ae peteetion, a' thocht, wes for us, grannie: 'Remember any one about whom his friends are anxious'—and he stopped for half a meenut. Ye cud hae heard a preen (pin) fall, an' a' said tae masel, 'Chairlie.'

"Dinna be ower cast doon aboot him, nor

gie up houp; he 's young an' thochtless, an' he 'ill maybe tak a turn sune.

"A 've savit five pund aff ma wages, an' a 'm sendin 't in a note, for a' didna want the fouk at the post-office tae ken oor affairs.

"Noo, gin ye be writin' Chairlie, will ye slip in a pund juist as a bit reminder o' his sister, an' the ither fower 'ill help tae py the Muirtown debt.

"Dinna think a 'm scrimpin' masel or daein' onything mean. Aifter a 've spent sax pund a year on claithes and little trokes, and three on ma kirk, a 'll hae aucht ower for the debt.

"When the laist penny 's paid o' Chairlie's debt a 'll buy the best black silk in London for ye; an' gin a 'm spared tae come hame tae the summer Sacrament, we 'ill gang thegither tae the table."

"Twa silly weemen," said Mary to herself, "for he 's juist a ne'er-dae-weel . . . an' yet, gin he cam in noo, a' wud gie him the claithes aff ma back, an' sae wud Lily. For the look in his een an' the soon' o' his voice."

II

HOW SHE CAME HOME

WHEN Jamie Soutar dropped into the smithy one spring evening with an impracticable padlock, and mentioned casually that he was going to London next day, the assembled neighbours lost power of speech.

"Did ye say London, Jamie?" Hillocks was understood to have shown great presence of mind in unparalleled circumstances; "an' are ye in yir senses?"

"As sune as ye recover yir strength, smith," said Jamie, taking no notice of fatuous questions, "a 'll be obleeged gin ye wud turn the key in this lock. It 's a wee dour tae manage; a' hevna used ma bag sin a' gaed tae the saut water saxteen year past."

"Did ye ever hear the like?" and the smith looked round the circle for support, refusing to treat Jamie's demand as an ordinary matter of business.

"What are ye glowerin' at me for as if a' wes a fairlie?" and Jamie affected anger; "hes a Drumtochty man no as muckle richt tae see the metropolis o' the country as ither fouk, gin he can pay his fare up an' doon?

"A've been wantin' tae see the Tooer o' London, whar mony a lord hes pairted wi' his heid, an' Westminster Abbey, whar the michty dead are lyin', an' the Hooses o' Parliament, whar they haver a hale nicht through, an' the streets, whar the soond o' feet never ceases.

"The fact is," and Jamie tasted the situation to the full, "a 'm anxious tae improve ma mind, an' gin ye speak me fair a 'll maybe gie the Glen a lecture in the schulehoose in the winter time wi' a magic-lantern, ye ken."

The neighbours regarded him with horror, and, after he had departed, united their wisdom to solve the mystery.

"Jamie 's by himsel in the Glen," summed up Hillocks, "an' hes a wy o' his ain. Ma thocht is that he juist took a notion o' seein' London, an' noo that we 've contered (opposed) him, Jamie 'ill go, gin it cost him ten notes."

On his way home Jamie gave Mary Robert-

son a cry, who was sitting very lonesome and sad-like before her door.

"Hoo are ye, Mary? the smell o' spring 's in the air, an' the buds are burstin' bonnie. Ye 'ill no hae heard that a 'm aff tae London the morrow, juist for a ploy, ye ken, tae see the wonders."

As Mary only stared at him, Jamie offered explanations in atonement for his foolishness.

"Ye see a 've aye hed an ambeetion tae see the big warld that lies ootside oor bit Glen, for its far awa' soon' hes been often in ma ear. A 've savit a note or twa, an' a 'll get a glimpse afore a' dee."

"It 's a Providence, an' naethin' less than an answer tae prayer," broke in Mary, in great agitation; "here hev I been murnin' that a' cudna get tae London masel, an' that a' kent naebody there, till ma heart wes weary in ma breist.

"Naethin' is sairer, Jamie, than tae ken that ane ye luve is lyin' ill amang strangers, wi' naebody o' her bluid tae speak a couthy word tae her, puir lassie, or gie her a drink. A' wes juist seein' her lyin' alane at the top of the big hoose, an' wushin' she wes wi 's a' in the Glen."

"Posty said something aboot Lily bein' a wee sober," Jamie remarked, with much composure, as if the matter had just come into his memory; "an' noo a' mind ye expeckit her hame for a holiday laist August. She wudna be wantin' tae traivel sae far north, a 'm jalousin'."

"Traivel!" cried Mary; "naebody cares for a long road gin it brings us hame; an' Lily wes coontin' she would come up wi' the Drumtochty fouk on the first Friday o' laist August. A' wes cleanin' up the place for a month tae hae 't snod, but she didna come, an' a 'm fearin' she 'ill no be here again; a' hed a feelin' frae the beginnin' a' wud never see Lily again.

"Her letter cam on a Thursday afternoon when I was beginnin' tae air the sheets for her bed, an' when Posty gave it, I got a turn. 'Lily 's no comin,' sit doon,' a' sed.

"Scarlet fever broke oot amang the bairns in the family, an' she thocht it her duty tae stay and help, for the hoose wes fu' o' nurses, an' the cairryin' wes by ordinar."

"It wes a sacrifice," said Jamie. "Lily never eneuch cared for hersel; the wark wud tell on her a 'll warrant."

"Ma opeenion is that she's never got the

better o' that month, an,' Jamie, a' hevna likit her letters a' winter. It 's little she says aboot hersel, but she 's hed a hoast (cough) for sax months, an' a' gither her breath 's failin'.

"Jamie, a' hevna said it tae a livin' soul, but a 've hed a warnin' no langer back than laist nicht. Lily 's deein', an' it wes London 'at hes killed her.

"Ye 'ill gae tae see her, Jamie; ye aye were a gude friend tae Lily, an' she likit ye weel. Write hoo she is, an' bring her back wi' you gin she can traivel, that a' may see her again, if it be the Lord's wull."

"Dinna be feared o' that, Mary; a 'll no come back withoot Lily," and Jamie's air of resolution was some consolation.

Before he left, Jamie visited a sheltered nook in Tochty woods, and when he inquired for Lily Grant next day at the door of a London West-End house, there was a bunch of fresh primroses in his hand.

"Disna live here noo, did ye say? then what hae ye dune wi' Lily? a' maun get tae the boddom o' this," and Jamie passed into the hall, the majestic personage at the door having no strength left to resist.

"Tell yir mistress this meenut that a freend hes come frae Drumtochty tae ask news o' Lily Grant, an' wull wait till he gets them," and Jamie's personality was so irresistible that the personage counselled an immediate audience.

"Grant's father, I suppose?" began Lily's mistress, with suspicious fluency. "No? Ah, then, some relative, no doubt? how good of you to call, and so convenient, too, for I wanted to see some of her family. She was an excellent servant, and so nice in the house; the others were quite devoted to her. But I never thought her strong. Don't you think London is trying to country-girls?"

Jamie did not offer any opinion.

"One of the children caught that horrid scarlet fever, and in the beginning of August, of all times, when we were going down to Scotland. Some of the servants had left, and the child had to be nursed here; there was lots of work, and it fell on Grant.

"She was going at that very time to her home—Drum something or other; or was it Ben?—it 's always the one or the other when it isn't Mac."

"Drumtochty is the name o' Lily's hame, an'

her auld grandmither wes lookin' for her aifter three years' service."

"Quite so; and that's just what I said to her. 'Take your holiday, Grant, and we'll worry on somehow,' but she wouldn't go. We thought it so pretty of her, for servants are generally so selfish; and she really did wonderfully, as much as three women, do you know?"

"If it wudna hurry ye, wud ye tell me her address in London?"

"Of course; I'm coming to that, but I felt you would like to hear all about her, for we had a great idea of Grant. It was a cold it began with, and one day I heard her coughing, and told her she must positively see a doctor; but Grant was very obstinate at times, and she never went."

"It's possible that she didna ken ane. An' what cam o' her cough?"

"It was too dreadful, and they ought not to have taken me to the room. I could not sleep all night. Grant had broken a blood-vessel, and they thought she was dying."

"Is Lily deid?" demanded Jamie.

"Oh no; how could you fancy such a thing? But our doctor said it was a very bad case, and

that she could not live above a week. We were desolated to part with her, but of course she could not remain,—I mean, we knew she would receive more attention in a hospital. So you understand——"

"A' dae," broke in Jamie, "fine; Lily workit for you an' yir bairns in a time o' need till a' the strength she brocht wi' her wes gane, an' then, when she wes like tae dee, ye turned her oot as ye wudna hae dune wi' ane o' yir horses. Ye 've a graund hoose an' cairry a high heid, but ye 're a puir, meeserable cratur, no worthy to be compared wi' the lass ye hev dune tae deith."

"You have no right——" but Jamie's eyes went through her and she fell away; "she can —have her wages for—two months."

"No one penny o' yir siller wull she touch beyond her lawful due; gie me the name o' the hospital, an' a 'll tak care o' oor puir lass masel."

When Jamie was told at the hospital that Lily had been taken away again in the ambulance next day to the house of the visiting physician, his wrath had no restraint.

"Is there nae place in this ceety whar a

freendless lassie can rest till she gaes tae her laist hame?" and Jamie set off for the physician, refusing to hear any explanation.

"Hev a' an appointment wi' Sir Andra? Yes, a' hev, an' for this verra meenut." So again he got access, for the virile strength that was in him.

"We have done all we could for her, but she has only a day to live," said Sir Andrew, a little man, with the manner of a great heart; "she will be glad to see you, for the lassie has been wearying for a sight of some kent face."

"Ye're Scotch," said Jamie, as they went upstairs, softening and beginning to suspect that he might be mistaken about things for once in his life; "hoo did ye bring Lily tae yir ain hoose?"

"Never mind that just now," said Sir Andrew. "Wait till I prepare Lily for your coming," and Jamie owned the sudden tone of authority.

"One of your old friends has come to see you, Lily"—Jamie noted how gentle and caressing was the voice—"but you must not speak above a whisper nor excite yourself. Just step into the next room, nurse."

"Jamie," and a flush of joy came over the pale, thin face, that he would hardly have recognised, "this is gude . . . o' ye . . . tae come sae far, . . . a' wes wantin' . . . tae see a Drumtochty face afore a'——" Then the tears choked her words.

"Ou ay," began Jamie with deliberation. "You see a' wes up lookin' aifter some o' Drumsheugh's fat cattle that he sent aff tae the London market, so of course a' cudna be here withoot giein' ye a cry.

"It wes a ploy tae find ye, just like hide-an'-seek, but, ma certes, ye hev got a fine hame at laist," and Jamie appraised the dainty bed, the soft carpet, the little table with ice and fruit and flowers, at their untold value of kindness.

"Div ye no ken, Jamie, that a 'm——" But Lily still found the words hard to say at three-and-twenty.

"Ye mean that ye hevna been takin' care o' yirsel, an' a' can see that masel," but he was looking everywhere except at Lily, who was waiting to catch his eye. "Ye 'ill need to gither yir strength again an' come back wi' me tae Drumtochty.

"Ye ken whar thae floors grew, Lily," and

Jamie hastily produced his primroses; "a' thocht ye micht like a sicht o' them."

"Doon ablow the Lodge in the Tochty woods . . . whar the river taks a turn . . . an' the sun is shinin' bonnie noo . . . an' a birk stands abune the bank an' dips intae the water."

"The verra place, a couthy corner whar the first primroses coom oot. Ye hevna forgot the auld Glen, Lily. Dinna greet, lassie, or Sir Andra 'ill be angry. Ye may be sure he 'ill dae a' he can for ye."

"He hes, Jamie, an' mair than a' can tell; a' wud like Grannie an' . . . the fouk tae ken hoo a 'ave been treated . . . as if a' wes a leddy, an' his ain blude.

"When they laid me in the bed at the hospital, an' a' githered that . . . it wudna be lang, an' awfu' longin' cam intae ma hert . . . for a quiet place tae . . . dee in.

"It was a graund airy room, an' everybody wes kind, an' a' hed a'thing ye cud wish for, but . . . it gied against ma nature tae . . . wi' a' thae strangers in the room; oor hooses are wee, but they 're oor ain."

Jamie nodded; he appreciated the horror of dying in a public place.

"Sir Andra cam roond and heard the accoont, an' he saw me greetin'—a' cudna help it, Jamie, —an' he read ma name at the tap o' the bed.

"'You 're from my country,' he said, but he didna need tae tell me, for a' caught the soond in his voice, an' ma hert warmed; 'don't be cast down, Lily;' a' coontit it kind tae use ma name; 'we 'ill do all we can for you.'

"'A' ken a 'm deein',' a' said, 'an' a 'm no feared, but a' canna thole the thocht o' slippin' awa in a hospital; it wud hae been different at hame.'

"'Ye 'ill no want a hame here, Lily;' it wes braid Scotch noo, an' it never soonded sae sweet; an', Jamie ''—here the whisper was so low, Jamie had to bend his head—"a' saw the tears in his een."

"Rest a wee, Lily; a 'm follow in'; sae he took ye tae his ain hoose an' pit ye in the best room, an' they 've waitit on ye as if ye were his ain dochter; . . . ye dinna need tae speak; a' wudna say but Sir Andra micht be a Christian o' the auld kind, a' mean, 'I was a stranger, and ye took Me in.'"

"Jamie," whispered Lily, before he left, "there 's juist ae thing hurtin' me a wee; it 's

the wy ma mistress . . . hes treated me. A' tried tae be faithfu', though maybe a' didna answer the bells sae quick the laist sax months, . . . an' a' thocht she micht . . . hae peetied a lone cratur mair.

"It 's no that a' hev ony cause o' complaint aboot wages or keep—a' wes twice raised, Jamie, an' hed a'thing a' needed, an' a 'm no hurt aboot bein' cairried tae the hospital, for there were five stairs tae ma room, an' . . . it wudna hae been handy tae wait on me.

"Na, na, Jamie, a 'm no onreasonable, but . . . a' houpit she wud hae come tae see me or . . . sent a bit word; gin a body's sober (weak) like me, ye like tae be remembered; it . . . minds you o' the luve o' God, Jamie," and Lily turned her face away. "A' wes prayin' tae see a Drumtochty face aince mair, an' a 've gotten that, an' gin ma mistress hed juist said, . . . 'Ye 've dune as weel as ye cud,' . . . a' wudna ask mair.

"Ye hae 't then, Lily," said Jamie, taking an instant resolution, "for a 've been tae see yir mistress, an' a' wes fair . . . ashamed the wy she spoke aboot ye, being Drumtochty masel, an' no' wantin' tae show pride.

"As sure 's a 'm here, she cudna find words for her thochts o' ye; it wes naethin' but yir faithfulness an' yir gude wark, hoo a'body liket ye an' hoo gratefu' she wes to you. A' wes that affeckit that a' hed tae leave.

"What wud ye say, wumman, gin yon graund lady hes been twice a-day at the hospital speirin' for you, kerridge an' a', mind ye; but ye ken they 're terrible busy in thae places, an' canna aye get time tae cairry the messages.

"But that 's no a'," for the glow on Lily's face was kindling Jamie's inspiration, and he saw no use for economy in a good work. "What think ye o' this for a luck-penny? twenty pund exact, an' a' in goud; it looks bonnie glintin' in the licht," and Jamie emptied on the table the store of sovereigns he had brought from Muirtown bank, without shame.

"The mistress surely never sent that . . . tae me?" Lily whispered.

"Maybe a' pickit it up on the street; they think awa in the country the verra streets are goud here. 'Give her this from us all,' were her verra words," said Jamie, whose conscience had abandoned the unequal struggle with his heart. "'Tell her that she's to get whatever

she likes with it, and to go down to her home for a long holiday.' "

"Did ye thank her, Jamie? Nae man hes a better tongue."

"Ma tongue never servit me better; sall, ye wud hae been astonished gin ye hed herd me," with the emphasis of one who stood at last on the rock of truth.

"A 'm rael content noo," Lily said, "but a' canna speak mair, an' a 've something tae say that 'ill no keep till the morn," and Jamie promised to return that evening.

Jamie waited in the hall till the last of the famous physician's patients had gone; then he went in and said:

"When a' entered this hoose ma hert wes sair, for a' thocht a defenceless lassie hed been ill-used in her straits, an' noo a' wud like to apologeese for ma hot words. Ye 've dune a gude work the day that 's no for the like o' me to speak aboot, but it 'ill hae its reward frae the Father o' the fatherless."

"Toots, man, what nonsense is this you 're talking?" said Sir Andrew; "you don't understand the situation. The fact is, I wanted to study Lily's case, and it was handier to have

her in my house. Just medical selfishness, you know."

"A' micht hae thocht o' that," and the intelligence in Jamie's eye was so sympathetic that Sir Andrew quailed before it. "We hev a doctor in oor pairish that 's yir verra marra (equal), aye practeesin' on the sick fouk, and for lookin' aifter himsel he passes belief."

"Juist Weelum Maclure ower again," Jamie meditated, as he went along the street. "London or Drumtochty, great physeecian or puir country doctor, there 's no ane o' them tae mend anither for doonricht gudeness. There 's naebody 'ill hae a chance wi' them at the latter end; an' for leein' tae, a' believe Sir Andra wud beat Weelum himsel."

When Jamie returned, Lily had arranged her store of gold in little heaps, and began at once to give directions.

"Ye maun py ma debts first, ye ken, Jamie; a' cudna . . . leave, thinkin' that a' wes awin' a penny tae onybody. Grannie aye brocht us up tae live sae that we cud look a'body in the face, and exceptin' Chairlie. . . .

"Twal shilling tae the shoemaker, an honest, well-daein' man; mony a time he 's telt me

aboot John Wesley: and a pund tae the dress-maker; it's no a' for masel; there wes anither Scotch lassie, . . . but that disna maitter. Cud ye pay thae accounts the nicht, for the dress-maker 'ill be needin' her money? . . . It wes ma tribble hindered me; . . . a' started ae day, an' the catch in ma side, . . . a' hed tae come back.

"Noo there 's ma kirk, an' we maunna forget it, for a 've been rael happy there; ma sittin' wes due the beginnin' o' the month, and a' aye gied ten shillings tae the missions; an', Jamie, they were speakin' o' presentin' the minister wi' some bit token o' respect aifter bein' twenty-five years here. Pit me doon for a pund—no ma name, ye ken; that wud be forward; juist . . . 'A gratefu' servant lass.'

"Ye 'ill get some bonnie hankerchief or siclike for the nurse; it wudna dae tae offer her siller; an' dinna forget the hoosemaid, for she 's hed a sair trachle wi' me. As for Sir Andra, . . . naething can py him.

"Here 's five pund, and ye 'ill gie 't tae Grannie; she kens wha it 's for; it 'ill juist feenish the debt . . .

"Ye can haud yir tongue, Jamie. Wull ye

write a line tae Chairlie, an' say . . . that a' wes thinkin' o' him at the end, an' expectin' him tae be a credit tae his fouk . . . some day; an', Jamie, gin he ever comè back in his richt mind tae the Glen, ye 'ill . . . no be hard on him like ye wes laist time?"

"Chairlie 'ill no want a freend gin a' be leevin', Lily; is that a'?" for ye 're tirin' yersel."

"There 's ae thing mair, but a 'm dootin' it 's no richt o' me tae waste Grannie's siller on 't, for a' wantit tae leave her somethin' wiselike; . . . but, O Jamie, a 've taken a longin' . . . tae lie in Drumtochty kirkyaird wi' ma mither an' Grannie.

"A' ken it 's a notion, but a' dinna like thae cemetairies wi' their gravel roadies, an' their big monuments, an' the croods o' careless fouk, an' the hooses pressin' on them frae every side."

"A' promised Mary," broke in Jamie, that a' wud bring ye hame, an a 'll keep ma word, Lily; gin it be God's wull tae tak yir soul tae Himsel, yir body 'ill be laid wi' yir ain fouk," and Jamie left hurriedly.

Next morning Sir Andrew and the minister were standing by Lily's bedside, and only looked at him when he joined them.

"Jamie, . . . thank ye a', . . . ower gude tae . . . a servant lass, . . . tell them . . . at hame."

Each man bade her good-bye, and the minister said certain words which shall not be written.

"Thae . . . weary stairs," and she breathed heavily for a time; then, with a sigh of relief, "A 'm comin'."

"Lily has reached the . . . landing," said Sir Andrew, and as they went downstairs no man would have looked at his neighbour's face for a ransom.

"A' wrote that verra nicht tae Drumsheugh," Jamie explained to our guard between the Junction and Kildrummie; "an' a 'm no sure but he 'ill be doon himsel wi' a neebur or twa juist tae gie Lily a respectable funeral, for she hes nae man o' her bluide tae come.

"Div ye see onything, Peter?" Jamie was in a fever of anxiety; "the Kildrummie hearse stands heich, an' it sud be there, besides the mourners."

"Kildrummie platform 's black," cried Peter from the footboard; "the 'ill be twal gin there be a man; ye stick by ane anither weel up the

wy; it 's no often a servant is brocht hame for beerial; a' dinna mind a case sin the line opened."

While they went through Kildrummie, Jamie walked alone behind the hearse as chief mourner, with a jealously regulated space of five feet between him and the neighbours; but as soon as the pine woods had swallowed up the procession, he dropped behind, and was once more approachable.

"Ye 've had a time o 't," said Hillocks, treating Jamie as an ordinary man again; "wha wud hae thocht this wes tae be the end o' yir London jaunt? Sall!" and Hillocks felt himself unable to grapple with the situation.

"This is juist naethin'," with vague allusion to the arrival by railway and the Kildrummie hearse; no worth mentionin' wi' the beginnin' o' the beerial at the ither end," and Jamie chose Whinnie's box, out of three offered, to brace him for descriptive narrative.

"Ye maun understand," began Jamie, knowing that he had at least four miles before it would be necessary for him to resume his position of solitary dignity, "that as sune as Lily turned ill she was taken tae the hoose o' a

great London doctor, an' Sir Andra waited on her himsel; there 's maybe no' anither o' his patients withoot a title; a' herd him speak o' a Duchess ae day.

"When it wes a' over, puir lassie, if they didna fecht tae py for the beerial. The minister threipit wi' me that he hed a fund at his kirk for sic objects, a sonsy man wi' a face that pit ye in mind o' hame to look at it, but a' saw through his fund; it 's fearsome hoo Scotch folk 'ill lee tae cover gude deeds."

"Div ye think he wud hae py'd it oot o' his ain pocket?" interrupted Hillocks.

"'Na, na,' a' said tae the minister,' for Hillocks was beneath notice, 'ye maun lat her mistress bear the beerial'—twenty pund, as a 'm on this road, she gied; 'a faithfu' servant, she 's tae want for nothing;' it wes handsome, an' 'ill be maist comfortin' tae Mary.

"Ye saw the coffin for yersels," and Jamie now gave himself to details; "the London hearse hed gless sides and twa horses, then a mourning-coach wi' the minister an' me; but that 's the least o 't. What think ye cam next?"

"Some o' the neeburs walkin' maybe," suggested Whinnie.

"Walkin'," repeated Jamie, with much bitterness, as of one who despaired of Drumtochty, and saw no use in wasting his breath; "juist so: ye 've hed mair rain here than in England."

"Never mind Whinnie, Jamie," intervened Drumsheugh; "we maun hae the rest o' the funeral; wes there another coach?"

"What wud ye say," and Jamie spoke with much solemnity, "tae a private kerridge, an' mair than ane? Ay, ye may look," allowing himself some freedom of recollection. "Sir Andra's wes next tae the coach, wi' the blinds drawn doon, and aifter it an elder's frae her kirk. He heard o' Lily through the minister, an' naething wud sateesfy him but tae dae her sic honour as he cud.

"Gaein' roond the corners o' the streets—a' cudna help it, neeburs—a' juist took a glisk oot at the window, an' when a' saw the banker's horses wi' the silver harness, a' wushed ye hed been there; sic respect tae a Drumtochty lass.

"Ye saw the lilies on the coffin," wound up Jamie, doing his best to maintain a chastened tone. "Did ye catch the writin'—

'In remembrance of Lily Grant,
Who did her duty.'

Sir Andra's ain hand; an' Lily got nae mair than her due."

When Jamie parted with Drumsheugh on the way home, and turned down the road to Mary's cottage, to give her the lilies and a full account of her lassie, Drumsheugh watched him till he disappeared.

"Thirty pund wes what he drew frae the Muirtown bank oot o' his savings, for the clerk telt me himsel, and naebody jalouses the trick. It 's the cleverest thing Jamie ever did, an' ane o' the best a 've seen in Drumtochty."

MILTON'S CONVERSION

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DRUMTOCHTY had a legitimate curiosity regarding the history of any new tenant, and Hillocks was invaluable on such occasion, being able to collect a complete biography during a casual conversation on the state of markets. No details of family or business were left out in the end, but there was an unwritten law of precedence, and Hillocks himself would not have condescended on the rent till he had satisfied himself as to the incomer's religion. Church connection was universal and unalterable in the Glen. When Lachlan Campbell had his argument with Carmichael, he still sat in his place in the Free Kirk, and although Peter Macintosh absented himself for a month from the Parish Kirk over the pew question, he was careful to explain to the doctor that he had not forgotten himself so far as to become a renegade.

"Na, na, a'm no coming back," Peter had

said after the doctor had done his best, "till ye 're dune wi' that stove, an' ye needna prig (plead) wi' me ony langer. What is the gude o' being a Presbyterian gin ye canna object? but a 'll give ye this sateesfaction, that though a' dinna darken the kirk door for the lave o' ma life, a 'll no gang ony ither place."

An immigrant was the only change in our church circles, and the kirkyard waited for the news of Milton's creed with appreciable interest.

"Weel, Hillocks?" inquired Drumsheugh, considering it unnecessary in the circumstances to define his question.

"Ou aye," for Hillocks accepted his responsibility, "a' gied Tammas Bisset a cry laist Friday, him 'at hes the grocer's shop in the Sooth Street an' a' the news o' Muirtown, juist tae hear the price o' butter, and a' happened tae licht on Milton an' tae say he wud be an addeetion tae oor kirk."

"Did ye though?" cried Whinnie, in admiration of Hillocks's opening move; "that wes rael cannie, but hoo did ye ken?"

"'Gin he be a help tae Drumtochty Kirk,' says Tammas"—Hillocks never turned out of

his way for Whinnie—"'it 's mair than he wes tae the Auld Kirk here in twenty year.' "

"The Free Kirk 'ill be pleased then," broke in Whinnie, who was incorrigible; "they 'ill mak him a deacon: they're terrible for the Sustentation Fund."

"'It 's no lost, Tammas, that a freend gets,' says I," continued Hillocks, "'an' we 'ill no grudge him tae the Free Kirk; na, na, we 're no sae veecious that wy in the Glen as ye are in Muirtown. Ilka man sud hae his ain principle and py his debts.

"'He coonted the Free Kirk waur than the auld here, an' a 'm thinkin' he 's ower pleased wi' himself tae change up by; he 'ill show ye some new fashions, a 'm judgin',' says Tammas." And Hillocks ceased, that the fathers might face the prospect of a new religion.

"It 's no chancy," observed Whinnie, collecting their mind.

"There wes a man doon Dunleith wy in ma father's time," began Drumsheugh, ransacking ancient history for parallels, "'at wud hae naethin' tae dae wi' kirks. He preached himsel in the kitchen, an' bapteezed his faimily in the mill dam. They ca'd him a dookie, but a 've

heard there 's mair than ae kind ; what wud he be, Jamie ? "

" Parteeklar Baptist," replied that oracle ; " he buried his wife in the stackyaird, an' opened vials for a year ; gin Milton be o' that persuasion, it 'ill be a variety in the Glen ; it 'ill keep 's frae wearyin'."

" The Dunleith man aye paid twenty shillings in the pund, at ony rate," Drumsheugh wound up, " an' his word wi' a horse wes a warranty : a' dinna like orra releegions masel, but the 'll aye be some camsteary (unmanageable) craturs in the warld," and the kirkyard tried to be hopeful.

Milton's first visit to the kirk was disappointing, and stretched Drumtochty's courtesy near unto the breaking. Hillocks, indeed, read Milton's future career in his conduct that day, and indulged in mournful prophecies at the smiddy next evening.

" Ye 're richt eneuch, smith ; that 's juist what he did, an' a' took his measure that meenut. When he telt Drumsheugh that it wes nae time tae be speakin' o' hairst at the kirk door, an' offered us a bookie each, a' saw there wes somethin' far wrang wi' him. As

sure as a 'm stannin' here, he 'ill be a tribble in the pairish.

"The Milton seat is afore oors, an' a' saw a' he did, frae the beginnin' o' the sermon tae the end, an' a' tell ye his conduct wes scandalous. Ae meenut he wud shak his head at the doctor, as if he kent better than the verra minister; the next he wud be fleein' through his Bible aifter a text. He wes never at peace, naither sittin' nor standin'; he 's juist an ettercap. There 's nae peace whar yon man is, a 'll warrant; a' never closed an ee laist Sabbath."

It was into Jamie's hands Milton fell when he reviewed the sermon on the way home, and expressed his suspicion of ministers who selected texts on subjects like Mercy and Justice.

"We aye get that sermon aboot the latter end o' hairst, Milton, an' it 's pop'lar; the fouk hae a great notion o' a gude life up here, an' they 're ill tae change. A 'm no sayin' but ye 're richt, though, an' it 'ill be a help tae hae yir creeticism.

"Drumtochty is clean infatuat aboot the doctor, an' canna see onything wrang in him. He 's been a' his days in the Glen, an' though he 's no sae stirrin' as he micht be, the mischief

o 't is that he aye lives a' he preaches, an' the stupid bodies canna see the want.

"As for texts, the doctor 's nae doot aggravatin'; there 's times a 've wanted tae hae the Sermon on the Mount torn oot o' the Bible an' gude bits o' the Prophets; he 's aye flingin' them in oor faces. Milton, a' tell ye," and Jamie stood still on the road to give solemnity to his description of Doctor Davidson's defects, "if there 's a moral text atween the boords o' the Bible, he 'ill hae a haud o 't."

"A 'm rael pleased tae hear sic soond views, Mister ——"

"Soutar is ma name—Jamie maist commonly."

"Soutar," and Milton might be excused falling into the snare, "ye ken the difference atween a show o' warks an' the root o' the maitter. A' wes astonished at yir elder; when a' pointed oot the defects in the sermon, he said, "Gin we dae a' the doctor telt us, we 'ill no be far wrang;' ye micht as weel be a heathen."

"Drumsheugh is nae standard," Jamie explained; "he 's sae begottit (taken up) wi' the commandments that a 'm feared o' him. He 's

clever at a bargain, but gin he thocht he hed cheatit onybody, Drumsheugh wudna sleep; it 's clean legalism.

"Ye micht try the Free Kirk, Milton; they 've a new man, an' he 's warmer than the doctor; he 's fund oot anither Isaiah, an' he 's sae learned that he 'ill maybe hae twa Robbie Burns' yet; but that 's naither here nor there; he 's young an' fu' o' speerit; gie him a trial."

Jamie discovered with much interest that Milton had been examining the Free Church, and had expressed his strong dissatisfaction, some said because of grossly erroneous doctrine, others because Carmichael had refused to allow him to preach. Doctrine was the ground he alleged to Jamie, who looked in to see how he had got settled and what he thought of things.

"A' peety this Glen," he said, with solemnity; "ae place it 's cauld morality, an' the ither it 's fause teaching. Div ye ken what a' heard wi' ma ain ears laist Sabbath frae Maister Carmichael?"

Jamie was understood to declare his conviction that a man who was not satisfied with one Isaiah might be capable of anything.

"Ye ken verra weel," for Milton believed Jamie a kindred spirit at this stage, "that we 're a' here on probation, and that few are chosen, juist a handfu' here and there; no on accoont o' ony excellence in oorsels, so we maunna boast."

"Verra comfortin' for the handfu'," murmured Jamie, his eyes fixed on the roof.

"Weel, gin yon young man didna declare in sae mony words that we were a' God's bairns, an' that He wes gaein' tae dae the best He cud wi' every ane o 's. What think ye o' that? —nae difference atween the elect an' the ithers, nae preeveleges nor advantages; it 's against baith scriptur an' reason."

"He wes maybe mixin' up the Almichty wi' his ain father," suggested Jamie; "a 've heard ignorant fouk say that a' the differ is that the Almichty is no waur than oor ain father, but oot o' a' sicht kinder. But whar wud ye be gin ye allooed the like o' that? half o' the doctrines wud hae tae be reformed," and Jamie departed, full of condolence with Milton.

It was not wonderful after these trying experiences that Milton became a separatist, and edified himself and his household in his kitchen.

Perhaps the Glen might also be excused on their part for taking a somewhat severe view of this schismatic proceeding and being greatly stirred by a sermon of the doctor's—prepared especially for the occasion—in which the sin of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram was powerfully expounded, and Milton's corn room described as a "Plymouthistic hut."

"Ma certes," said Hillocks to Jamie on the way home, "the doctor's roosed. Yon wes an awfu' name he cam oot wi'; it 's no verra cannie tae hae onything tae dae wi' thae preachin', paitterin' craturs."

"There wes a sough through the pairish, Hillocks, that ye were ower by sittin' in the cauf-hoose (chaff-house) yersel laist week, an' that ye were extraordinar' ta'en up wi' Milton. Elspeth Macfadyen wes threipin' (insisting) that you an' Milton were thinkin' o' starting a new kirk. Miltonites wud be a graund name; a' dinna think it 's been used yet."

"Elspeth's tongue 's nae scannel." Hillocks's curiosity had led him astray, and he was now much ashamed. "A' juist lookit in ae forenicht tae see what kin o' collie-shangie Milton wes cairryin' on, an' a' wes fair dis-

gustit. He ran the hale time frae Daniel tae the Revelations, an' it wes a' aboot beasts frae beginnin' tae end. A rammelin' idiot, nae-thin' else," and Hillocks offered up Milton as a sacrifice to the indignation of the Glen.

Shortly afterwards Hillocks began to make dark allusions that excited a distinct interest, and invested his conversation with a piquant flavour.

"It wes an ill day when his lordship lat yon man intae the pairish," and he shook his head with an air of gloomy mystery. "A' wush a' saw him oot o 't withoot mischief. Oor fouk hev been weel brocht up, an' they 're no what ye wud ca' simple, but there 's nae sayin'; weemen are easily carried."

"Ay, ay," said Jamie encouragingly.

"A 'm telt," continued Hillocks, "that the wratches are that cunnin' an' plausible they wud wile a bird aff a tree; they got intae a pairish in the Carse, and afore the year wes oot gin they didna whup aff three servant lassies tae Ameriky."

"Div ye mean tae say that Milton . . ." and the fathers noticed how Jamie was guiding Hillocks to his point.

"Ye 've said the word, Jamie, an' it's a gey

like business for Drumtochty," and it was known in twenty-four hours up as far as Glen Urtach that Hillocks had hunted Milton's religion to earth, and found him out to be a Morman.

This was considered one of Jamie's most successful efforts, and the Glen derived so much pure delight from the very sight of Milton for some weeks that he might have become popular had it not been for an amazing combination of qualities.

"His tracts are irritatin', an' no what we 've been accustomed tae in Drumtochty"—Drumsheugh was giving judgment in the kirkyard—"but a' cud thole them. What a' canna pit up wi' is his whinin' an' leein'. A' never heard as muckle aboot conscience an' never saw sae little o 't in this pairish."

It was a tribute in its way to Milton that he alone of all men aroused the dislike of the kindest of parishes, so that men fled from before his face. Hillocks, who was never happy unless he had two extra on his dogcart, and unto that end only drew the line at tramps, would pass with a bare compliment on board, and drop the scantiest salutation.

"Hoo are ye the day, Milton? a' doot it's threatenin' a shoor."

Drumsheugh had been known to disappear into a potato field at Milton's approach, under pretence of examining the tubers, while Burnbrae, who was incarnate charity, and prejudiced in favour of anything calling itself religion, abandoned this "professor" in regretful silence. Drumtochty was careful not to seat themselves in the third until Milton had taken his place, when they chose another compartment, until at last Peter used to put in this superior man with Kildrummie to avoid delay. It was long before Milton realised that Drumtochty did not consider his company a privilege, and then he was much lifted, seeing clearly the working of conscience in a benighted district.

"Milton hes been giein' oot in Muirtown that he's thankfu' he wes sent tae Drumtochty," Jamie announced one Sabbath, with chastened delight, "an' that his example wes affectin' us already. 'They daurna face me in the verra train,' says he tae Tammas Bisset; 'it's the first time yon fouk ever came across a speeritual man. They're beginnin' tae revile,

an' we ken what that means; a' never thocht a' wud hae the honour of persecution for righteousness' sake.' That 's his ain mind on't, an' it 's a comfort tae think that Milton's contented."

"A 've kent ane or twa fair leears in ma time," reflected Hillocks, "but for a bare-face——"

"Persecuted is a lairge word," broke in Drumsheugh, "ay, an' a graund tae, an' no fit for Milton's mooth. Gin he named it tae me, a 'd teach him anither story. A foumart (pole cat) micht as weel speak o' persecution when he 's hunted aff the hillside.

"Na, na," and Drumsheugh set himself to state the case once for all, "we 've oor faults maybe in Drumtochty," going as far by way of concession as could be expected, "but we 're no juist born fules; we 've as muckle sense as the chuckies, 'at ken the differ atween corn an' chaff wi' a luke."

Jamie indicated by a nod that Drumsheugh was on the track.

"Noo there 's ane o' oor neeburs," proceeding to illustration, "'at lectures against drink frae ae new year tae anither. He 's a true

man, an' he luves the Glen, an' naebody 'ill say an ill word o' Airchie Moncur—no in this kirk-yaird at ony rate."

"A fine bit craiturie," interjected Hillocks, whom Archie had often besought in vain to take the pledge for example's sake, being an elder.

"Weel," resumed Drumsheugh, "there 's anither neebur, an' a 'm telt that his prayer is little ahint the minister's at the Free Kirk meetin's, and a' believe it, for a gude life is bund tae yield a good prayer. Is there a man here that wudna be gled tae stand wi' Burnbrae in the Jidgment?"

"A 'm intendin' tae keep as close as a' can masel," said Jamie, and there was a general feeling that it would be a wise line.

"It 's no Milton's preachin' Drumtochty disna like, but his leein', an' that Drumtochty canna abide. Nae man," summed up Drumsheugh, "hes ony richt tae speak aboot releegion ye canna trust in the market."

So it came to pass that Milton counted Drumtochty as an outcast place, because they did not speak about the affairs of the life to come, and Drumtochty would have nothing to

do with Milton, because he was not straight in the affairs of the life which now is. Milton might have gone down to the grave condemning and condemned had it not been for his sore sickness, which brought him to the dust of death, and afforded Drumsheugh the opportunity for his most beneficent achievement.

"They think he may come roond wi' care," reported Drumsheugh, "but he 'ill be wakely for twa month, an' he 'ill never be the same man again; it 's been a terrible whup." But the kirkyard, for the first time in such circumstances, was not sympathetic.

"It 's a mercy he 's no been taken awa," responded Hillocks, after a distinct pause, "an' it 'ill maybe be a warnin' tae him; he 's no been unco freendly sin he cam intae the Glen, either wi' his tongue or his hands."

"A 'm no sayin' he hes, Hillocks, but it 's no a time tae cuist up a man's fauts when he 's in tribble, an' it 's no the wy we 've hed in Drumtochty. Milton 's no fit tae meddle wi' onybody noo, nor, for that maitter, tae manage his ain business. There 's no mair than twa acre seen the ploo; a 'm dootin' the 'll be a puir sowin' time next spring at Milton."

"Gin he hedna been sic a creetical an' ill-tongued body the Glen wud sune hae cleared up his stubble; div ye mind when Netherton lost his horses wi' the glanders, an' we jined an' did his plooin'? it wes a wise-like day's wark."

"Yir hert 's in the richt place," said Drumsheugh, ignoring qualifications; "we 'll haud a plooin' match at Milton, an' gie the cratur a helpin' hand. A 'm willin' tae stand ae prize, an' Burnbrae 'ill no be behind; a' wudna say but Hillocks himsel micht come oot wi' a five shillin' bit."

They helped Milton out of bed next Thursday, and he sat in silence at a gable window that commanded the bare fields. Twenty ploughs were cutting the stubble into brown ridges, and the crows followed the men as they guided the shares with stiff resisting body, while Drumsheugh could be seen going from field to field with authority.

"What 's this for?" inquired Milton at length; "naebody askit them, an' . . . them an' me hevna been pack (friendly) thae laist twa years."

"It 's a love-darg," said his wife, "because ye 've been sober (ill), they juist want to show

kindness, bein' oor neeburs. Drumsheugh, a' hear, set it agaein', but there 's no a fairmer in the Glen hesna a hand in 't wi' horses or sic-like."

Milton made no remark, but he was thinking, and an hour before midday he called for his wife.

"It 's rael gude o' them, an', wumman, it 's mair than . . . a' wud hae dune for them. An', Eesie, . . . gither a'thing thegither ye can get, and gie the men a richt dinner, and bid Jeemes see that every horse hes a feed o' corn . . . a full ane; dinna spare onything the day."

It was a point of honour on such occasions that food for man and beast should be brought with them, so that there be no charge on their neighbour, but Drumsheugh was none the less impressed by Milton's generous intentions. When he told Hillocks, who was acting as his aide-de-camp, that worthy exclaimed, "Michty," and both Drumsheugh and Hillocks realised that a work of grace had begun in Milton.

He refused to lie down till the men and horses went out again to work, and indeed one could not see in its own way a more heartening

sight. Pair by pair our best horses passed, each with their own ploughman, and in a certain order, beginning with Saunders, Drumsheugh's foreman, full of majesty at the head of the parish, and concluding with the pair of hardy little beasts that worked the uplands of Bogleigh. A fortnight had been spent on preparation, till every scrap of brass on the high-peaked collars and bridles glittered in the sunlight, and the coats of the horses were soft and shiny. The tramp of the horses' feet and the rattle of the plough chains rang out in the cold November air, which had just that touch of frost which makes the ground crisp for the ploughshare. The men upon the horses were the pick of the Glen for strength, and carried themselves with the air of those who had come to do a work. Drumsheugh was judge, and Saunders being therefore disqualified, the first prize went to young Burnbrae, the second to Netherton's man, and the third to Tammas Mitchell—who got seven and sixpence from Hillocks, and bought a shawl for Annie next Friday. Drumsheugh declared it was rig for rig the cleanest, quickest, straightest work he had seen in Drumtochty, and when the ploughs

ceased there was not a yard of oat stubble left on Milton.

After the last horse had left and the farm was quiet again—no sign of the day save the squares of fresh brown earth—Drumsheugh went in alone—he had never before crossed the door—to inquire for Milton and carry the goodwill of the Glen. Milton had prided himself on his fluency, and had often amazed religious meetings, but now there was nothing audible but "gratefu'" and "humbled," and Drumsheugh set himself to relieve the situation.

"Dinna mak sae muckle o 't, man, as if we hed worked yir fairm for a year an' savit ye frae beggary. We kent ye didna need oor help, but we juist wantit tae be neeburly an' gie ye a lift tae health.

"A'body is pleased ye 're on the mend, and there 's no ane o 's that wudna be prood tae dae ony troke for ye till ye 're able tae manage for yersel; a 'll come roond masel aince a week an gie a look ower the place." Milton said not one word as Drumsheugh rose to go, but the grip of the white hand that shot out from below the bed-clothes was not unworthy of Drumtochty.

"Ye said, Hillocks, that Milton wes a graund speaker," said Drumsheugh next Sabbath, "an' a' wes expectin' somethin' by ordinar on Thursday nicht, but he hedna sax words, an' ilka ane wes separate frae the ither. A 'm judgin' that it 's easy tae speak frae the lips, but the words come slow and sair frae the hert, an' Milton hes a hert; there 's nae doot o' that noo."

On the first Sabbath of the year the people were in the second verse of the Hundredth Psalm, when Milton, with his family, came into the kirk and took possession of their pew. Hillocks maintained an unobtrusive but vigilant watch, and had no fault to find this time with Milton. The doctor preached on the Law of Love, as he had a way of doing at the beginning of each year, and was quite unguarded in his eulogium of brotherly kindness, but Milton did not seem to find anything wrong in the sermon. Four times—Hillocks kept close to facts—he nodded in grave approval, and once, when the doctor insisted with great force that love did more than every power to make men good, Milton was evidently carried, and blew his nose needlessly. Hillocks affirmed stoutly

that the crumpled pound note found in the recesses of the ladle that day came from Milton, and corroborative evidence accumulated in a handsome gown sent to Saunders' wife for the lead he gave the ploughs that famous day, and a box of tea, enough to last her time, received by blind old Barbara Stewart. Milton was another man, and when he appeared once more at the station and went into a compartment left to Kildrummie, Drumsheugh rescued him with a show of violence and brought him into the midst of Drumtochty, who offered him exactly six different boxes on the way to the Junction, and reviewed the crops on Milton for the last two years in a distinctly conciliatory spirit.

Milton fought his battle well, and only once alluded to the past.

"It wes ma misfortune," he said to Drumsheugh, as they went home from kirk together, "tae mix wi' fouk that coonted words mair than deeds, an' were prooder tae open a prophecy than tae dae the wull o' God.

"We thocht that oor knowledge wes deeper an' oor life better than oor neeburs', an' a 've been sairly punished. Gin a' hed been bred in

Drumtochty, a' micht never hae been a by-word, but a' thank God that ma laist years 'ill be spent amang true men, an', Drumsheugh, a 'm prayin' that afore a' dee a' also may be . . . a richt man."

This was how Drumsheugh found Milton walking in crooked paths and brought him into the way of righteousness, and Milton carried himself so well afterwards that Drumsheugh had only one regret, and that was that Jamie Soutar had not lived to see that even in Milton there was the making of a man.

OOR LANG HAME

OOR LANG HAME

PETER BRUCE was puzzled by a passenger who travelled from the Junction on a late October day, and spoke with a mixed accent. He would not be more than forty years of age, but his hair was grey, and his face bore the marks of unchangeable sorrow. Although he was not a working man, his clothes were brushed to the bone, and his bag could not contain many luxuries. There was not any doubt about his class, yet he did not seem willing to enter the third, but wandered up and down the train, as if looking for a lost carriage. As he passed beyond the van he appeared to have found what he was seeking, and Peter came upon him examining the old Kildrummie third, wherein Jamie Soutar had so often held forth, and which was now planted down on the side of the line as a storehouse for tools and lamps. The stranger walked round the forlorn remains and peered in at a

window, as if to see the place where he or some one else he knew had sat.

"Ye ken the auld third," said Peter, anxious to give a lead; "it 's been aff the rails for mair than twal years; it gies me a turn at times tae see it sittin' there like a freend that 's fa'en back in the warld."

As the stranger gave no sign, Peter attached himself to his door—under pretext of collecting the tickets—and dealt skilfully with the mystery. He went over the improvements in Kildrummie, enlarging on the new U. P. kirk and the extension of the Gasworks. When these stirring tales produced no effect, the conclusion was plain.

"It 's a fell step tae Drumtochty, an' ye 'll be the better o' the dogcairt. Sandie 's still tae the fore, though he 's failin' like 's a'; wull a' tell the engine driver tae whustle for 't?"

"No, I 'll walk . . . better folk than I have tramped that road . . . with loads, too." And then, as he left the station, the unknown said, as if recollecting his native tongue, "Gude day, Peter; it is a comfort tae sae ae kent face aifter mony changes."

Something hindered the question on Peter's

lips, but he watched the slender figure—which seemed bent with an invisible burden—till it disappeared, and then the old man shook his head.

"It beats me tae pit a name on him, an' he didna want tae be askit; but whaever he may be, he 's sair stricken. Yon 's the saddest face 'at hes come up frae the Junction sin a' hoddit Flora Campbell in the second. An' a 'm judgin' he 'ill be waur tae comfort."

The road to Drumtochty, after it had thrown off Kildrummie, climbed a hill, and passed through an open country till it plunged into the pine woods. The wind was fresh, blowing down from the Grampians, with a suggestion of frost, and the ground was firm underfoot. The pungent scent of ripe turnips was in the air, mingled, as one passed a stackyard, with the smell of the newly gathered grain, whose scattered remains clung to the hedges. As the lonely man passed one homestead, a tramp was leaving the door, pursued with contempt.

"Awa wi' ye, or a 'll louse the dog," an honest woman was saying. "Gin ye were a puir helpless body a 'd gie ye meat an' drink, but an able-bodied man sud be ashamed tae

beg. Hae ye nae speerit that ye wud hang upon ither fouk for yir livin' ?"

The vagabond only bent his head and went on his way, but so keen was the housewife's tongue that it brought a faint flush of shame to his cheek. As soon as she had gone in again, and the two men were alone on the road, the one with the sad face gave some silver to the outcast.

"Don't thank me—begin again somewhere . . . I was a tramp myself once," and he hurried on as one haunted by the past.

His pace slackened as he entered the pines, and the kindly shelter and the sweet fragrance seemed to give him peace. In the centre of the wood there was an open space, with a pool and a clump of gorse. He sat down and rested his head on his hands for a while ; then he took two letters out of his pocket that were almost worn away with handling, and this was the first he read :

"Ye mind that the laist time we met wes in Drumtochty kirkyaird, an' that I said hard things tae ye aboot yir laziness and yir conduct tae yir grandmither. Weel, a 'm sorry for ma words this day, no that they werena true,

for ye ken they were, but because a 've tae send waesome news tae ye, an' a' wush a kinder man hed been the writer.

"Ye ken that yir sister Lily gaed up tae London an' took a place. Weel, she hes served wi' sic faithfulness that she 'ill no be here tae welcome ye gin ye come back again. A' happened tae be in London at the time, and wes wi' Lily when she slippit awa, an' she bade me tell ye no tae lose hert, for ae body at least believed in ye, an' wes expeck in' ye tae turn oot weel.

"A' wush that were a', for it 's eneuch for ye tae bear, gin ye be a man an' hae a memory. But tribbles aye rin in pairs. Yir grandmither kept up till the beerial wes ower, an' then she took tae her bed for a week. 'A 'll never be up again,' she said tae me, 'an' a 'll no be lang here.' We laid her aside Lily, an' she sent the same word tae ye wi' her last breath: 'Tell Chairlie a' wes thinkin' aboot him till the end, an' that a 'm sure ma lassie's bairn 'ill come richt some day.'

"This letter 'ill gie ye a sair hert for mony a day, but ye wull coont the sairness a blessing an' no an ill. Never lat it slip frae yir mind

that twa true weemen loved ye an' prayed for ye till the laist, deein' wi' yir name on their lips. Ye 'ill be a man yet, Chairlie.

"Dinna answer this letter—answer yon fond herts that luve an' pray for ye. Gin ye be ever in tribble, lat me ken. A' wes yir grandmither's freend and Lily's freend; sae lang as a 'm here, coont me yir freend for their sake.

JAMES SOUTAR."

It was half an hour before he read the second letter.

"DEAR CHAIRLIE,—A 'm verra sober noo, an' canna rise; but gin ony medeecine cud hae cured me, it wud hae been yir letter. A' thae years a 've been sure ye were fechtin' yir battle, an' that some day news wud come o' yir victory.

"Man, ye 've dune weel—a pairtner, wi' a hoose o' yir ain, an' sic an income. Ye aye hed brains, an' noo ye 've turned them tae accoont. A' withdraw every word a' ca'd ye, for ye 're an honour noo tae Drumtochty. Gin they hed only been spared tae ken o' yir success!

"A 've divided the money amang yir sisters in Muirtown, and Doctor Davidson 'ill pit the lave intae a fund tae help puir laddies wi' their education. Yir name 'ill never appear, but a 'm prood tae think o' yir leeberality, and mony will bless ye. Afore this reaches ye in America a 'll be awa, and ithers roond me are near their lang hame. Ye 'ill maybe tak a thocht o' veesiting the Glen some day, but a' doot the neeburs that githered in the kirkyaird 'ill no be here tae wush ye weel, as a' dae this day. A 'm glad a' lived tae get yir letter. God be wi' ye.

JAMES SOUTAR."

The letter dropped from his hand, and the exile looked into the far distance with something between a smile and a tear.

"They were gude men 'at githered ablow the beech-tree in the kirkyaird on a Sabbath mornin'," he said aloud, and the new accent had now lost itself altogether in an older tongue; "and there wesna a truer hert amang them a' than Jamie. Gin he hed been spared tae gie me a shak o' his hand, a' wud hae been comforted; an' aifter him a' wud like a word

frae Drumsheugh. A' wunner gin he be still tae the fore.

"Na, na," and his head fell on his chest, "it 's no possible; o' a' the generation 'at condemned me, no ane 'ill be leevin' tae say forgiven. But a' cudna hae come hame suner—till a' hed redeemed masel."

He caught the sound of a cart from the Glen, and a sudden fear overcame him at the meet- of the first Drumtochty man. His first movement was to the shelter of the wood; then he lay down behind the gorse and watched the bend of the road. It was a double cart, laden with potatoes for Kildrummie station, and the very horses had a homely look; while the driver was singing in a deep, mellow voice, "Should auld acquaintance be forgot." The light was on his face, and the wanderer recognised him at once. They had been at school together, and were of the same age, but there was not a grey hair in young Burnbrae's beard, nor a line on his face.

As the cart passed, Grant watched the tram, and marked that the Christian name was in fresh paint.

"It 's James, no John, noo. Burnbrae hesna

feenished his lease, an' a 'm thinkin' Jean 'ill no hae lasted long aifter him. He wes a gude man, an' he hed gude sons."

The cart was a mile on the road, and Burnbrae's song had long died into silence among the pines, before Grant rose from the ground and went on his way.

There is a certain point where the road from Kildrummie disentangles itself from the wood, and begins the descent to Tochty Bridge. Drumtochty exiles used to stand there for a space and rest their eyes on the Glen which they could now see, from the hills that made its western wall to the woods of Tochty that began below the parish kirk, and though each man might not be able to detect the old home, he had some landmark—a tree or a rise of the hill—to distinguish the spot where he was born, and if such were still his good fortune, where true hearts were waiting to bid him welcome. Two Drumtochty students returning in the spring with their honours might talk of learned studies and resume their debates coming through the wood, but as the trees thinned conversation languished, and then the lads would go over to the style. No man said aught

unto his neighbour as they drank in the Glen, but when they turned and went down the hill, a change had come over them.

"Man, Dauvid," Ross would say—with three medals to give to his mother, who had been all day making ready for his arrival, and was already watching the upland road—"far or near, ye 'ill never fin' a bonnier burn than the Tochty; see yonder the glisk o 't through the bridge as it whummels ower the stanes and shimmers in the evening licht."

"An' Hillocks's haughs," cried Baxter, who was supposed to think in Hebrew and had won a Fellowship for foreign travel, "are green an' sweet the nicht, wi' the bank o' birks ahint them, an' a' saw the hill abune yir hame, Jock, an' it wes glistenin' like the sea."

Quite suddenly, at the sight of the Glen, and for the breath of it in their lungs, they had become Drumtochty again, to the names they had called one another in Domsie's school, and as they came to the bottom of the hill, they raced to see who first would reach the crest of the ancient bridge that might have been Marshal Wade's for its steepness, and then were met on the other side by Hillocks, who gave

them joyful greeting in name of the parish. But not even Hillocks, with all his blandishments, could wile them within doors that evening. John Ross saw his mother shading her eyes at the garden gate and wearying for the sight of his head above the hill, and already David Baxter seemed to hear his father's voice, "God bless ye, laddie; welcome hame, and weel dune." For the choice reward of a true man's work is not the applause of the street, which comes and goes, but the pride of them that love him.

What might have been so came upon this emigrant as he gazed upon the Glen, that the driver of the Kildrummie bread cart, a man quite below the average of Drumtochty intelligence, was struck by the hopelessness of his attitude, and refrained from a remark on the completion of harvest which he had been offering freely all day. They were threshing at Hillocks's farm that day, and across the river Grant saw the pleasant bustle in the stackyard and heard the hum of the mill. It used to be believed that Hillocks held a strategic position of such commanding power that no one had ever crossed that bridge without his supervision

—except on Friday when he was in Muirtown—and so strong was the wayfarer's longing for some face of the former time, that he loitered opposite the barn door, in hopes that a battered hat, dating from the middle of the century and utilised at times for the protection of potatoes, might appear, and a voice be heard, "A 've seen a waur day, ye 'ill be gaein' up the Glen," merely as a preliminary to more searching investigation at what was the frontier of Drumtochty. Hillocks also must be dead, and as for the others, they were too busy with their work to give any heed to a stranger. A gust of wind catching up the chaff, whirled it across the yard and powdered his coat. The prodigal accepted the omen, and turned himself to the hill that went up to Mary's cottage.

He had planned to pass the place, and then from the footpath to the kirkyard to have looked down on the home of his boyhood, but he need not have taken precautions. No one was there to question or recognise him; Mary's little house was empty and forsaken. The thatch had fallen in with the weight of winter snows, the garden gate was lying on the walk, the scrap of ground once so carefully kept was

overgrown with weeds. Grant opened the unlatched door—taking off his hat—and stood in the desolate kitchen. He sat down on the edge of the box-bed no one had thought it worth while to remove, and covered his face while memory awoke. The fire again burned on the hearth, and was reflected from the dishes on the opposite wall; the table was spread for supper, and he saw his wooden bicker with the black horn spoon beside it; Mary sat in her deep old armchair, and stirred the porridge sputtering in the pot; a rosy-cheeked laddie curled in a heap at his grandmother's feet saw great marvels in the magic firelight.

"Get up, Chairlie, an' we 'ill tak oor supper, an' then ye 'ill feenish yir lessons. Domsie says ye hae the makin' o' a scholar, gin ye work hard eneuch, an' a' ken ye 'ill dae that for yir auld grannie's sake an' yir puir mither's, wunna ye, ma mannie?" but when her hand fell on his head, he rose suddenly and made for the other room, the "ben" of this humble home.

A little bit of carpet on the floor; four horsehair chairs, one with David and Goliath in crochet-work on its back; a brass fender that

had often revealed to Mary the secret pride of the human heart; shells on the mantel-piece in which an inland laddie could hear the roar of the sea, with peacock's feathers also, and a spotted china dog which was an almost speaking likeness of the minister of Kildrummie; a mahogany chest of drawers—the chairs were only birch, but we can't have everything in this world—whereon lay the Family Bible and the *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Rutherford's Letters*, besides a box with views of the London Exhibition that were an endless joy. This was what rose before his eyes, in that empty place. Within the drawers were kept the Sabbath clothes, and in this room a laddie was dressed for kirk, after a searching and remorseless scrubbing in the "but," and here he must sit motionless till it was time to start, while Mary, giving last touches to the fire and herself, maintained a running exhortation, "Gin ye brak that collar or rumple yir hair, peety ye, the 'ill be nae peppermint-drop for you in the sermon the day." Here also an old woman whose hands were hard with work opened a secret place in those drawers, and gave a young man whose hands were white her last penny.

"Ye 'ill be carefu', Chairlie, an' a 'll try tae send ye somethin' till ye can dae for yirsel, an', laddie, dinna forget . . . yer Bible nor yir hame, for we expect ye tae be a credit tae 's a'." Have mercy, O God!

Within and without it was one desolation—full of bitter memories and silent reproaches—save in one corner, where a hardy rose-tree had held its own, and had opened the last flower of the year. With a tender, thankful heart, the repentant prodigal plucked its whiteness, and wrapped it in Jamie's letters.

Our kirkyard was on a height facing the south, with the massy Tochty woods on one side and the manse on the other, while down below—a meadow between—the river ran, so that its sound could just be heard in clear weather. From its vantage one could see the Ochils as well as one of the Lomonds, and was only cut off from the Sidlaws by Tochty woods. It was not well kept, after the town's fashion, having no walk, save the broad track to the kirk door and a narrower one to the manse garden; no cypresses or weeping willows or beds of flowers—only four or five big trees had flung their kindly shadow for generations over

the place where the fathers of the Glen took their long rest; no urns, obelisks, broken columns, and such-like pagan monuments, but grey, worn stones, some lying flat, some standing on end, with a name and date, and two crosses, one to George Howe, the Glen's lost scholar, and the other to William Maclure, who had loved the Glen even unto death. There was also a marble tablet let into the eastern wall of the church, where the first ray of the sun fell,

Sacred to the memory of
REV. ALEXANDER DAVIDSON, D.D.,
for fifty years
the faithful Minister of Drumtochty.

Beside the beech-tree where the fathers used to stand were two stones. The newer had on it simply "Lachlan Campbell," for it was Lachlan's wish that he should be buried with Drumtochty. "They are good people, Flora," he said the day he died, "and they dealt kindly by us in the time of our trouble." But the older was covered with names, and these were the last, which filled up the space and left no space for another:

LILY GRANT, aged 23,
a servant lass.
MARY ROBERTSON, aged 75.

Charlie knelt on the turf before the stone, and, taking off his hat, prayed God his sins might be forgiven, and that one day he might meet the trusting hearts that had not despaired of his return.

He rose uncomforted, however, and stood beneath the beech, where Jamie Soutar had once lashed him for his unmanliness. Looking down, he saw the fields swept clean of grain; he heard the sad murmur of the water, that laughed at the shortness of life; withered leaves fell at his feet, and the October sun faded from the kirkyard. A chill struck to his heart, because there was none to receive his repentance, none to stretch out to him a human hand, and bid him go in peace.

He was minded to creep away softly and leave Drumtochty forever—his heart full of a vain regret—when he found there was another mourner in the kirkyard. An old man was carefully cleaning the letters of Maclure's name, and he heard him saying aloud:

"It disna maitter though, for he 's in oor herts an' canna be forgotten. Ye 've hed a gude sleep, Weelum, an' sair ye needed it. Some o 's 'ill no be lang o' followin' ye noo."

Then he went over to Geordie's grave and read a fresh inscription :

MARGARET HOWE, his mother.

"They 're thegither noo," he said softly, "an' content. O Marget, Marget," and the voice was full of tears, "there wes nane like ye."

As he turned to go, the two men met, and Grant recognised Drumsheugh.

"Gude nicht, Drumsheugh," he said; "a' ken yir face, though ye hae forgotten mine, an' nae doot it 's sair changed wi' sin and sorrow."

"Are ye Drumtochty?" and Drumsheugh examined Charlie closely; "there wes a day when a' cud hae pit his name on every man that cam oot o' the Glen in ma time, but ma een are no what they were, an' a 'm failin' fast masel."

"Ay, a' wes born an' bred in Drumtochty, though the pairish micht weel be ashamed o' ma name. A' cam tae visit ma dead, an' a 'm

gaein' awa for gude. Naebody hes seen me but yersel, an' a 'll no deny a 'm pleased tae get a sicht o' yir face."

"Ye 're no," and then Drumsheugh held out his hand, "Chairlie Grant. Man, a 'm gled a cam intae the kirkyaird this day, and wes here tae meet ye. A' bid ye welcome for the Glen and them 'at 's gane."

"A 'm no worthy, Drumsheugh, either o' them 'at 's livin' or them 'at 's dead, but Gude kens a 've repentit, an' the grip o' an honest hand, an' maist o' a' yir ain, 'ill gie me hert for the days tae come."

"Nane o 's is worthy o' some of them 'at 's lyin' here, Chairlie, naither you nor me, but it 's no them 'at will be hardest on oor fauts. Na, na, they ken an' luve ower muckle, an' a 'm houpin' that 's sae . . . wi' the Almichty.

"Man, Chairlie, it did me gude tae hear that ye hed played the man in Ameriky, and that ye didna forget the puir laddies o' Drumtochty. Ay, Jamie telt me afore he deed, an' prood he wes aboot ye. 'Lily 's gotten her wish,' he said; 'a' kent she wud.'

"He wes sure ye wud veesit the auld Glen some day, an' wes feared there wudna be a

freend tae gie ye a word. Ye wes tae slip awa tae Muirtown the nicht withoot a word, an' nane o 's tae ken ye hed been here? Na, na, gin there be a cauld hearth in yir auld hame, there 's a warm corner in ma hoose for Lily's brither," and so they went home together.

When they arrived, Saunders was finishing the last stack, and broke suddenly into speech.

"Ye thocht, Drumsheugh, we would never get that late puckle in, but here it is, safe and soond, an' a 'll warrant it 'ill buke (bulk) as weel as ony in the threshin'."

"Ye 're richt, Saunders, and a bonnie stack it maks;" and then Charlie Grant went in with Drumsheugh to the warmth and the kindly light, while the darkness fell upon the empty harvest field, from which the last sheaf had been safely garnered.

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